

Diversity and Social Inclusion: A Theoretical Framework

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**PHD
The University of Edinburgh
2006**



Declaration

I hereby confirm that:

- (a) I have composed this thesis;
- (b) the work is my own; and
- (c) the work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

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Abstract

The meaning of social exclusion is heavily contested and the task for policy concerned to promote social inclusion consequently ill-defined. This thesis examines the meaning of social inclusion and theorises what would be required to maximize the diversity that can be included into mainstream society while preserving social cohesion. The primary aim is to develop a coherent theoretical framework, identifying where scope to expand the mainstream may be found, as well as logical limitations and probable constraints. The implications for social policy design and delivery are then explored. The focus is on welfare goods and services as they play a pivotal role, either supporting social inclusion, or reinforcing social exclusion by confirming incapacity, unnecessary segregation and failure to promote wider social connections. Inclusion into mainstream society can thus be promoted by inclusion into appropriately designed and delivered mainstream welfare provision. Here too, though, there will be limits and constraints on the diversity that can be included.

Given the many ways of conceptualising social exclusion, its causes and effects, the starting point is to examine theoretical literatures concerned with disadvantage. Key themes from social justice, poverty, discrimination and social exclusion theory are extracted; commonalities and differences identified. Social justice themes of fair distribution and cultural recognition fit well with themes to be found in poverty and discrimination literatures respectively. All can be shown to be relevant to social processes and relationships, a recurrent theme in social exclusion literature. Conversely, to view social justice, poverty and discrimination in terms of processes and relationships casts fresh light on how they operate. This points to a theoretical framework centring on the distributive processes and relationships required for the design and delivery of welfare goods and services.

The framework is built by theorising firstly the macro-level structural and cultural environment, how it is and could be shaped to maximise inclusion. The meso-level processes through which this environment is expressed and through which attachment to it occurs are then considered. The final component of the framework concerns the nature of micro-level social relationships through which those processes are enacted, the transactional needs and identities of micro-level agents. It is shown that there is scope for adjustments at each of the three levels, either expanding or contracting the parameters of the mainstream.

Using the theoretical framework to identify implications for social policy indicates the existence of a new 'inclusive' model, distinct from liberal market and traditional public sector models. The key features of the inclusive model are summarised and their implications for the direction of policy strategy illustrated. The strengths and weaknesses of possible designs of mainstream policy are considered. In this light, policy initiatives in the employment services field are then explored and compared. This demonstrates that the inclusive model has clear, practical implications for the design and delivery of social policy.

Acknowledgements

I would firstly like to thank my supervisors, Dr Ian Dey and Prof. Ruth Jonathan, for their invaluable support – for the many intellectually challenging and stimulating discussions which maintained my enthusiasm over the years, and helped me to focus and refine my thinking. I also gained greatly from a three month user-fellowship at the Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion (London School of Economics) for which I would like to thank Prof. John Hills and colleagues.

In terms of practical support, I would like to thank the ESRC for awarding me a Studentship. The University Disability Office played a major role in making it possible for me to study, arranging for adjustments to premises, and providing assistants to fetch and carry library books. I would also like to thank library staff, particularly Nicola Moncur and Frances Fullarton, who always went out of their way to be helpful.

Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends - Danny McShane, Cameron Paton, Nina Dutton, Sarah Wilson, Matt Pearce, Marnie Roadburg, and Susan Elsley, among others – for listening to me enthuse and grumble about this thesis over a six year period.

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Chapter 1: Situating the Thesis – An Overview of Context and Challenges

Introduction

Social exclusion has been described as “...the single dominant issue on the current political agenda in contemporary Europe...” (Ratcliffe 2000, p169). It is therefore curious that it should remain such an ill-defined, contested concept. That this is so is possibly the only thing commentators would agree upon. Yet, without clarity about the meaning of exclusion and coherent theory about its nature, objectives for policy are similarly likely to remain ill-defined and contested.

The recent appointment of a new Cabinet post to tackle social exclusion confirms its continuing political importance. There are sound reasons for this. Over recent years, significant demographic, cultural, political, economic and technological upheavals have occurred in the United Kingdom and beyond, bringing new threats, opportunities and complexities. There is greater mobility of finances, information, ideas and populations; greater diversity of social strata and communities, and greater emphasis on individualism. The so-called ‘War on Terror’ has introduced new social tensions between nation states and communities. To counteract pressures towards social fragmentation, there is a pressing need to conceptualise what inclusion means, into what inclusion is to be, how exclusion occurs and how it can be addressed. We urgently need to find shared commonalities amidst diversity, around which to build social cohesion. In addition, changes to the operation and location of power wrought by globalization, the apparent imperviousness to reform of public sector services, the intransigence of poverty and inequality, are factors which can be expected to contribute to the disempowerment and disengagement of individuals.

The aim of the thesis is to develop a theoretical framework through which to identify the implications for the design and delivery of social policy, where the overall goal is to maximize the diversity that can be included into mainstream society. It follows that inclusion must be on a basis of empowerment to express difference, rather than its oppression; empowerment and

engagement go together. However, there will be limits to what can be included without jeopardizing social cohesion, causing 'the mainstream' to fragment.

This introductory chapter sketches out the context within which this thesis is situated and the key challenges it will need to address. It begins with an overview of societal and theoretical contexts, and expressions of fragmentation. It proceeds to discuss the roles of theory and social policy. In this context, the research aim and approach are clarified and the structure of the thesis described.

An overview of the societal context

Traditionally, socio-economic class has been viewed as the most significant manifestation of social stratification. Yet, it is clear that particular groups are disproportionately represented in lower income and/ or employment bands. Social science increasingly discusses demographic strata defined by characteristics such as sex, ethnicity, disability, and age. The rise of feminism, and the increasing realization of women's capacity to be economically independent of men, has challenged gender relations and traditional roles in the work-place and at home. It is to this that some have attributed the growth of lone parenthood. The decline in manufacturing industry has reduced employment opportunities for unskilled labour, undermining the bread-winner status of working-class men. Racism has been given fresh impetus by the 'War on Terror'. Fears about opening the flood-gates to asylum-seekers and economic migrants are heightened by the possibility that incomers may be bent on the destruction of Western civilization. The realization that terrorists may be 'home-grown' only compounds racial tensions. In addition, there has been a growing disability movement, as disabled people challenge what they experience as the paternalism and disempowerment of traditional public services, and widely-held exclusionary attitudes.

In Britain, the span of political ground covered by the dichotomy of right and left has narrowed considerably towards the middle ground. There have been changes to dominant ideologies, as socialism has waned and communism vanished from the political mainstream. At the other end of the political spectrum, the surge in inequality shown to accompany market deregulation has undermined claims of wealth 'trickling down' the socio-economic classes. Views around major issues of the day, notably attitudes to European integration or the protection of the environment,

cut across mainstream political parties, leaving peripheral parties to form around each. Nor is it clear where concerns of groups founded on characteristics other than socio-economic status are to find expression in the current political arena.

In the economic sphere, the dominant contextual issue is globalization:

“...appropriately conceived as an historical process which engenders a shift in the spatial reach of networks and systems of social relations to transcontinental (or interregional) patterns of human organization, activity and the exercise of economic power” (Perraton 2000, p128).

Economic variables have become increasingly determined at global, or at least supranational, level. No one seems to deny that financial markets have been restructured, that money and technology-based business can now be moved from one tax regime to another with ease and that multi-national corporations are now key players in national economies. However, there remains debate about the significance of this; whether globalisation really does remove national governments’ scope for tax and spend style redistribution or whether this is a convenient myth propagated by those anyway politically opposed to it. Certainly, it has presented new challenges.

It has been suggested that globalization moves power downwards, to devolved structures and the formation of local community identities, as well as upwards to supranational institutions (Giddens 1998). Coincidentally or otherwise, the advent of social exclusion discourse has been marked by an emerging interest in neighbourhoods that have been ‘cut off’ from the mainstream (e.g. see Lupton 2003; Power & Mumford 1999). Yet, while spatial segregation of communities may be becoming more pronounced, a new geography of cross-national cultural boundaries is emerging. This is not to argue that the nation-state is no longer a significant ‘socio-cultural unit’, but to acknowledge the permeability of spatial boundaries to cultural influences, as technological advances result in the “...relentless thrusting of distant, in fact exterritorial and spatially unanchored images, into the life-world of every individual” (Bauman 2000, p74). Thus, cultural norms and understandings are subject to continual challenge. Moreover, it is possible to be excluded from (or by) those prevailing in one nation state while being included in those elsewhere.

Undoubtedly, society has become more complex, more subject to rapid change and more culturally pluralistic, notwithstanding the crude polarization of Western 'Christian' and Islamic cultural values arising in the aftermath of 9/11. If anything these developments have accelerated dynamics towards segregation and exclusion. At worst, the result could be social incohesion and exclusion provoked by vast and expanding inequalities, irreconcilable cultural differences, intolerance, and the disempowerment of the nation state. In such a world: "...the sight of difference is the portent of danger, horrifying for being unfamiliar and unspeakable" (Bauman 2000, p82), boding ill for the inclusion of diversity.

Regarding social policy, a well-rehearsed debate continues between the alternatives of liberal, market model and bureaucratic public sector model, with the former increasingly gaining the upper hand. Innovation has frequently been restricted to finding ways to combine the two, by introducing market practices into public sector provision, e.g. see Glennerster (1997) on 'quasi-markets' or Giddens' 'third way' (1998). Recently, there have been calls for empowerment as the focus for reform (see Byrne, Purnell and Taylor 2006) perhaps signaling the beginnings of a new model. There has been a growing emphasis on personalization, tailoring responses to individuals' specific circumstances instead of a 'one-size-fits-all' approach (see Leadbeater 2004). Yet much remains within a liberal market paradigm which equates empowerment with choice, and choice with market mechanisms. As will be explored, neither private nor traditional public sector approaches separately or in combination necessarily lead to the inclusion of a diversity of end users, or their empowerment. The challenge is to find a new model: "...the discrediting of collectivist and liberal market models provides the critical context of the current search to identify new models of social order and justice" (Stewart 2000, p1).

Theoretical context

It is important to consider the theoretical context for three reasons. Firstly, as this thesis is primarily a work of social theory it needs to be positioned in relation to it. Secondly, theory about the nature of society must logically be of critical importance to understandings of what it means to be excluded from, or included in, society. It should also help explain why exclusion occurs. Thirdly, it is the backdrop to theories about disadvantage, particularly certain discourses around discrimination and from the social exclusion literature. Clearly, not all social theory will

be directly relevant, and there is insufficient space here for any detail. This section briefly discusses key areas of particular significance for this thesis.

Structure versus agency

The development of sociological theory is marked by repeated attempts to render coherent apparent disjunctions between structure and agency, objectivity and subjectivity, positivistic and hermeneutical epistemologies. Some, such as Talcott Parsons, have embarked upon a quest for "...a general, *inclusive* social theory, one which would be adequate to issues of consensus *and* conflict, stability *and* change..." (Holmwood 1996, p33). This may or may not be a fruitless – even pointless – journey. While it is certainly possible to arrange disparate elements under one umbrella, this does not necessarily amount to a coherent synthesis, or a resolution of contradiction. Neither can the result be expected to have explanatory purchase or practical, prescriptive application (see Holmwood 1996).

Structuration theory (Giddens 1984) casts structures as both the means through which social practices are enabled and the outcome of social practices. Giddens' thesis is that (macro-level) structures are created by recursive or routinised (micro-level) expressions of agency:

"...‘structure’ is regarded as rules and resources recursively implicated in social reproduction; institutionalized features of social systems have structural properties in the sense that relationships are stabilized across time and space" (Giddens 1984, pxxxi).

He is concerned to expose the ‘duality of structure’: "...the rules and resources drawn upon in the production and reproduction of social action are at the same time the means of system reproduction..." (1984, p19). Structuration theory is seen as transcending two conceptual dualisms or divisions, the first separating the conscious subject from social collectivities and the second between agency and collective forms of social life (Cohen 2000). His notion of structure involves the analytic deconstruction of procedures into procedural rules (how the practice is performed), moral rules (appropriate enactment), material (allocative) resources and resources of authority (Cohen 2000). The structured practice is summarized as "...the exchange of currency for goods or services" (Cohen 2000, p95). Structural properties required include "...material resources represented by currency, the administrative resources of the state that support the

currency, moral codes...and, of course, the knowledge of the skills needed to perform the exchange” (Cohen 2000, p95).

These concerns find expression throughout much of the literature on disadvantage and exclusion. Questions proliferate about the balance between structure and agency as the explanation for disadvantageous outcomes, what links structures to agents, and the extent to which structure constrains agency. This indicates the need to consider structural forms and their rules, the capacity and behaviours of micro-level actors, and the processes connecting each to the other.

Postmodernism

The quest for a ‘general theory’ has been most emphatically rejected by postmodernists, who distrust all ‘totalising metanarratives’ or ‘grand narratives’ which suppress difference in order to provide an overview, purport to show the direction for progress, the road to emancipation, and the ‘future to be accomplished’. Although some concerns lie beyond the purview of this thesis (such as discussions of types of knowledge), there is much to be found in postmodernist texts on the nature of the social bond, identity (‘constituting subjects’), power, and fragmentation.

According to Lyotard, one of postmodernism’s arch proponents:

“...the question of the social bond, insofar as it is a question, is itself a language game, the game of inquiry. It immediately positions the person who asks as well as the addressee and the referent asked about: it is already the social bond.” (1984, p15).

At root “...language games are the minimum relation required for society to exist...” (1984, p15). It is through language games that social positions are enacted, understood and connected:

“...no self is an island; each exists in a fabric of relations that is now more complex and mobile than ever before. Young or old, rich or poor, a person is always located at “nodal points” of specific communication circuits, however tiny they may be” (Lyotard 1984, p15).

Yet, no one is entirely powerless over the messages that traverse and position him (Lyotard 1984).

It follows that the identity of ‘the subject’ is not fixed, but can be viewed as a creation of discourse:

“Sexists, racists, and imperialists all use similar techniques - they make *their* ‘normalizing’ discourse prevail, and, in doing so, they can actually create or bring into being the deviant or what many postmodernists call *the other*. Their discourse actually helps to *create* the subordinate identities of those who are excluded from participation in it” (Butler 2002, p46, his emphasis).

Furthermore, “People become signs, part of the play of language...” so that, for example women become signifiers for the male other. “We thus talk people into being...” (Butler 2002, p47). Moreover,

“What postmodern theory helps us to see is that we are all constituted in a broad range of subject positions, through which we move with more or less ease, so that all of us are combinations of class, race, ethnic, regional, generational, sexual, and gender positions” (Butler 2002, p56).

Foucault in particular emphasized the fluidity of ‘the self’ and the scope for self-creation (1986).

Derrida’s work stresses the importance of superficial appearance or representation – which he calls ‘text’ - as the vehicle for understanding. However, it cannot reveal any underlying ‘truth’ or ‘reality’. Systems of thought and analysis too are ‘textual’ and, as such, forever contestable and subject to interpretation, thus:

...there never was a center or foundation which could offer the reassurance of certitude to which modern forms of analysis seem perpetually to aspire, even as they operate to destabilize prevailing certainties” (Smart 2000, p455).

Postmodernists offer a different, if equally helpful perspective on the ‘social bond’ to that espoused by Giddens’, with his emphasis on exchange procedures. Their insights into its nature and processes, and the complexity and fluidity of identity, enhance understanding of the challenge of maximizing the inclusion of diversity - how people with diverse characteristics can be attached via ‘social bonds’ and how the nature of those bonds can itself be responsible for creating characteristics. However, their outright rejection of the possibility of fixity or certainty is problematic in that:

“...however radical they may seem as critics, they lack a settled external viewpoint, and this means that so far as real-life ongoing politics is concerned, they are passively conservative in effect” (Butler 2002, p61).

For postmodernists, it is futile to attempt to construct any platform for action on ever-shifting terrain. To seek to discern underlying unifying coherence is to deny difference and to be branded as committing a destructive, even terrorist, act (Lyotard 1984). Yet, as will be argued, particularly considering the bleakness of the alternative: “A worthwhile end is the harmonizing of differences in such a ways as to achieve the richest possible synthesis” (Askonas 2000, p298).

Theories and discourses of disadvantage

An overview

Current theory about the causes and nature of disadvantage and exclusion is as complex and fragmented as the societies in which disadvantage and exclusion are found. Proposed policy solutions, even in one and the same society, are often piecemeal and unstrategic, and sometimes downright contradictory. Not only are connections between theoretical approaches generally unarticulated, if considered at all, links between theory, policy and practice are often incoherent.

Within the ambit of research and policy broadly concerned to explore and tackle disadvantage, a variety of concepts, discourses and paradigms are currently in usage¹. These can be roughly grouped under four major headings, each encompassing a number of understandings, discourses and concepts. Discussion of inequality features in all in different ways.

Social justice literature aims to shed light on what should be the overall goal for society and what is required for fairness. There are two main themes to be found: distributive justice, concerned with the basis on which goods should be distributed, and cultural recognition, broadly referring to the importance of recognizing and valuing different group-based cultural norms and characteristics. *Poverty* debates are concerned with the material resources required to achieve minimum living standards and the case for redistribution. There is much discussion of how minima can be defined and the development of methods for empirical exploration accordingly. Some see poverty as comprised of a wide range of factors, including unemployment, ill-health, homelessness and so on, while others take a narrower focus on inadequate income and wealth, as the underlying cause, or effect, of all other aspects of poverty. Sen’s ‘capabilities’ approach represents a distinct development, effectively defining living standards in terms of what a person is able to do, and what they need in order to be able to do it.

The literature on *discrimination* is particularly varied, in that approaches have emerged out of separate group-based areas of study. It may, though, be possible to identify cross-cutting themes. Finally, the field of *social exclusion* is marked by a plethora of theoretical approaches and understandings of its meaning. In the early days of social exclusion discourse, 'exclusion' meant not covered by state social insurance protection. These days it more often refers to exclusion from the labour market. It can also be regarded as a synonym for poverty, a phenomenon experienced by 'the underclass', or an umbrella term covering all forms of disadvantage. A recurrent theme is the detachment from social processes and relationships.

Reasons for complexity and ambiguity

An obvious reason for the complexity in, and variance between, discourses around disadvantage and exclusion would be that they have many causes and effects and thus different concepts and discourses are required to understand and describe them. However, it is not obvious why disadvantage and exclusion inevitably must have multiple causes and effects. In a simply structured, mono-cultured, slow-changing social context, sealed from external influences, the nature of disadvantage and exclusion may be similarly straightforward. The complexity of understandings about disadvantage and exclusion is thus likely to reflect the complexity of the society, or societies, in which they were developed.

Discourses originate in different countries and have evolved at particular times. Each reflects the historical context and prevailing cultural values, explaining economic, political and social issues of the day:

"All studies of social policy towards poor and deprived people reveal the problem that different discourses are dominant in different national traditions as well as within some countries, and often vitiate attempts at productive cross-national discussion" (Veit-Wilson 1998, p48).

The result can be that different terminology is used to describe concepts which, on closer examination, appear much the same, or that each discourse represents a particular slant or interpretation. Conversely, the same terminology can be used to describe entirely different concepts. Even where the language remains constant, understandings of its meaning can shift. Poverty of the nineteenth century is not the same experience as poverty today, and understandings of its meaning will similarly have moved on.

The key point is that theories and concepts do not develop independently of their context, but rather represent constructions and explanations in keeping with specific histories and norms. With the strengthening of globalization, and the erosion of national barriers, it may not just be financial markets that broach national state boundaries and merge together into transnational structures and processes, but also theories and discourses that permeate beyond the parameters of the society from whence they originated. For example, the concept of social exclusion originates from France as a product of an intellectual tradition founded on notions of the 'social contract' and solidarity, with seminal thinkers such as Rousseau and Durkheim (Silver 1994). Meanwhile, from the heavily market-orientated USA comes the discourse of 'the underclass', of ghettoisation and marginalisation (Burchardt *et al* 2002a). In Britain the primary discourse has been around poverty and the importance of income to enable participation. There is also a tradition based on citizenship rights (see Marshall 1950).

As a country which is both a member of the European Union (EU) and with longstanding historical ties to the USA (not to mention the Commonwealth and countries like Australia), the UK is perhaps particularly well placed for exposure to alternative discourses and policies (it may follow that the subsequent scope for incoherence makes the task of analyzing meanings particularly pressing). There have been active attempts by the likes of Charles Murray to transport the American concept of an underclass to Britain, with the support of right wing academics and newspapers, leading to its adoption by like-minded politicians in the early 1990s. Also during this period, the EU provided the arena for a 'clash' of discourses on disadvantage as the traditional Anglo-Saxon poverty (distributional) paradigm came up against the continental, particularly French, (relational) paradigm of social exclusion, resulting in 'mutual incomprehension' (Room 1995a). It would seem that globalisation is not necessarily just an economic phenomenon.

There are discernible political reasons why social exclusion discourse gained political popularity in Britain. In 1989, Secretary of State for Social Security John Moore announced that poverty no longer existed in Britain.² It consequently became difficult to engage Conservative politicians in debates using a discourse of poverty. To use a discourse of social exclusion enabled dialogue on disadvantage to continue. When New Labour came to power in 1997, it was keen to diffuse pressure to raise benefit levels, having made a commitment to accept the previous government's spending limits. It therefore may have had its reasons for embracing social exclusion discourse,

although later it reinstated tackling poverty, particularly child poverty, as a major objective. Irrespective of what concepts actually mean, this suggests there can be political reasons behind the choice of language and its relationship to political action (and inaction). Longstanding concepts may be renamed or rebranded in order to promote supposedly 'new' initiatives, or to distract attention from problems which are intractable or where there is not the political will to address them. This no doubt contributes to the ambiguity that previously clear terms come to possess.

Fragmentation

Expressions of fragmentation

While postmodernism may justifiably be accused of a degree of abstraction of little direct use to social policy formulation, there is much empirical evidence of fragmentation which *is* directly relevant. Fragmentation is problematic in general terms because it can lead to the reinvention of wheels and unaddressed omissions. As discussed above, multiple discourses can describe the same phenomenon while one discourse can describe many, leading to complexity and confusion. Poor communication between silos leads to missed opportunities to 'add value' or learn from others. Without interaction, inaccurate and potentially damaging assumptions go unchecked. Focusing on fragments makes it hard to see whether a big picture exists of overarching (or underpinning) themes or issues. This greatly increases the difficulty of taking a strategic approach. Yet, the desire for 'ontological security' (Giddens 1984) can result in a reluctance to engage with the unfamiliar: "Listening and conversing with 'aliens', in academia as elsewhere, is all too rare. It must be cultivated" (Askonas 2000, p299).

It is indisputable that Britain today is a multicultural society. The extent to which people from different ethnic cultures do, or should, integrate into wider society are matters for debate. It is also debatable whether the phenomenon of 'parallel lives' (Cantle 2001) is prompted by a desire to preserve socio-cultural identity, economic disadvantage, or local authority housing policy. What masquerades as cultural difference may in fact be economic disadvantage (Wilson 1987). Group dynamics can pull in opposing directions: towards demonstrating sameness in order to gain acceptance and equal treatment; towards differentiation and attempts to gain cultural

recognition for the value of difference (Fraser 1997). This scenario poses obvious dilemmas for social inclusion and social cohesion. The central issue for this thesis, though, is not so much whether people from different cultural backgrounds do or should integrate, but the extent to which integration of diversity into the mainstream is possible, if diversity is to be preserved rather than oppressed. This is clearly pertinent to groups other than those formed around ethnicity and/ or cultural distinctiveness, such as disabled people. In passing, it is worth noting distinctions that can be drawn between 'inclusion' and 'integration'. The latter often has connotations of imposition or enforcement (see Ratcliffe 2000). However, they can be treated as distinct, if closely related, phenomena rather than degrees of one phenomenon, in that *inclusion* of diversity can be said to have implications for social and systems *integration*, i.e. social cohesion.

Politically, fragmentation is evident in the structuring of government departments and competition between them for money and legislative time. It would, though, be wrong to suggest that the Westminster Parliament is devoid of cross-governmental structures. These include the Cabinet, the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit and assorted groupings of Ministers and/ or officials from different departments. Part of the rationale for establishing the Social Exclusion Unit was to co-ordinate action on issues spanning government departments. Notwithstanding these examples, objectives, cultures, and policymaking remain predominantly within departmental silos.

Further complexity has been introduced by the devolution settlements. The interface between reserved powers and those devolved to the Scottish Parliament is far from straightforward. For example, anti-discrimination legislation is reserved to Westminster, yet areas covered by anti-discrimination legislation, such as education and housing, are devolved. The Scottish Parliament has powers to encourage equal opportunities (Schedule 5, Section L2 of the Scotland Act 1998) and, to that end, has introduced equality clauses into some Acts, e.g. the Local Government (Scotland) Act 2003³.

With regard to academia, study is fragmented into separate disciplines. While there is increasing recognition of the value of interdisciplinary study, it remains largely the case that "...we are all stuck in the positivism of this or that discipline of learning, the learned scholars have turned into scientists, the diminished tasks of research have become compartmentalized and no one can

master them all” (Lyotard 1979, p41). There are pressures on researchers to specialise, and there can be competition for resources between academic departments and between academic institutions. As Askonas observes, “...exclusion which erects unpassable barriers between different disciplines and professions is pernicious” (2000, p299). In exploring theory around disadvantage and exclusion it becomes evident that there is relevant material to be found in various disciplines. This thesis therefore casts a wide net, drawing not just on theory commonly discussed in relation to social policy, but sociological, political and psychological theory as well as ‘group-based’ theory emanating from Women’s Studies, Disability Studies, etc.

For obvious reasons, political and academic fragmentation can have repercussions for the quality of policy. However there are other factors which lead to it being unstrategic and piecemeal. Policy may be developed reactively, in response to unforeseen events. Further problems arise from what Dunleavy (1995) terms ‘political hyperactivism’; the imperative for politicians to demonstrate activity through proposing sweeping changes. This can result in an abundance of poorly thought-through, overlapping, initiatives, making it hard to gauge the impact of any one in isolation.

Fragmentation is also evident in the design and evolution of policy. For example, the social security system has been cut-back, embellished and re-engineered over a prolonged period, in light of differing ideological, economic and demographic drivers. It also provides a prime example of ‘client-group’ thinking. Benefits, and related employment services such as the New Deals, are designated for specific groups, defined by personal characteristic (e.g. lone parents, disabled people, older people), role (e.g. carer), status (e.g. unemployed or economically inactive) or past status (e.g. the extent of national insurance contributions paid). Yet it could be argued that this is too rigid – not fragmented enough – to address the possible combinations of barriers arising from an individual’s unique mix of characteristics and circumstances. For example, the biggest barrier to work for a disabled person may be lack of child-care provision, while for a lone parent it may be ill-health. Immense complexity can co-exist with crude simplification, neither of them necessarily reflecting needs.

Fragmentation has been deliberately introduced into delivery structures. The separation of policy from delivery was an explicit intention of government policy in the early 1990s, with the creation of ‘Next Steps Agencies’ like the Benefits Agency and the Child Support Agency.

Privatisation, compulsory competitive tendering, purchaser/ provider splits all potentially contribute to fragmentation, complexity and localized variation. There have been shifts in the role of local authorities, away from direct service provision and towards procurement and regulation. The voluntary sector has increasingly become drawn into the ambit of statutory service provision. Voluntary sector organizations usually focus on a particular client group, such as children, older people or disabled people (often a particular impairment group), again not apparently engaging with the multiple aspects of identity. Competition for funds (whether through contracts, statutory or other funders) and for the ear of policymakers, can militate against collaborative, interagency working and information-sharing.

Although a rationale given for introducing fragmentation is to promote choice, the negative consequence for service users is that it can be left to them to join up the pieces. They may be obliged to engage with a variety of agencies, undergo multiple repetitive assessments – sometimes for the same thing. For example, personal assistance support for disabled people is available via community care or housing support from local authorities, education authorities, government employment services, or the Independent Living Funds. Each has specific criteria, is available in specific settings and provides specified types of assistance – even if needs are basically the same irrespective of setting⁴. The resulting complexity can be highly disempowering. To negotiate access, identify and understand options, challenge unsatisfactory decisions, enforce accountability, and ensure quality can require expertise and determination.

Evidence of reconnection?

Whatever the undeniable pressures towards fragmentation, it would be wrong to suggest that they are solely in that direction. The implications of mergers at global or supranational level have been flagged. The forthcoming establishment of a Commission for Equality and Human Rights, bringing together the existing Commissions⁵ and adding new equality strands of age, sexual orientation, religion and belief, may provide a platform for acknowledging the multiple aspects of identity and extracting cross-cutting themes. Interestingly, this development was driven by the European Union, i.e. a supranational institution, forcing action to tackle inequalities experienced by various groups onto national agendas.

Alongside a strong impetus towards personalisation (which might, but not inevitably, signal greater fragmentation) there begins to emerge evidence of strategic realignment. For example, in the field of disability policy, the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit's report "Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People" (2005) sets out a long-term cross-governmental strategy, recognising that many issues cut across departmental silos. It proposes to establish 'individual budgets', pooling funding streams and assessments to replace currently fragmented provision for personal assistance, equipment and other needs. On welfare to work policy, there have been proposals to bring together the existing New Deals for particular client groups and combine them into a generic menu of options from which Personal Advisers can select, to match the particular needs of each client (Building on New Deals, DWP 2004).

We are now in an era where there is increasing concern to 'join up' policy and to promote partnership working between agencies. Yet, the concern does not appear to extend to the need to 'join up' theory. Perhaps due to fragmentation within academia, this has remained remarkably impervious to interconnection and cross-fertilisation.

None of this is necessarily an argument for centralisation or homogenisation. There may be strong arguments why it makes sense to devolve by geographical area, target policy by client group, or keep theory separated by academic discipline. Specialisation may be necessary to address distinct needs or forms of disadvantage. It is, however, proposed that theory and policy require reframing, to identify the appropriate location of division between sameness and difference and between mainstream and specialist.

The role of theory

Theory, policy and empirical research

It is suggested that, in an 'ideal' model, there are sequential (or possibly circular) connections between theory, policy and empirical research. Theoretical research is not an alternative to empirical research, but a necessary precursor to it. Theory about the causes or nature of a social problem and possible solutions is required to steer empirical data collection and analysis. If theoretical incongruities remain unresolved, they can find expression as incoherent policy. In

practice, though, it is possible for both policy and empirical research to have but a fleeting acquaintance with theory. Interpretations of empirical evidence and subsequent policy direction can be contingent on whoever happens to have the political upper-hand at the time, compromising capacity to take a long-term strategic approach.

While it seems obvious that the definition of a problem is an essential prerequisite of effective social policy, the notion is not without its detractors: "There is... no necessary link between a more precise definition of a problem and more effective responses" (Spicker 1999, p160). If 'definition' is synonymous with empirical description, Spicker has a good point. Much effort may be (and has been) devoted to describing an issue like poverty, classifying manifestations and describing incidence. While study remains at that level, little if anything may be revealed about underlying causes and the consequently appropriate direction for policy. Any number of causal factors may be attributed to one and the same manifestation. Poverty might be attributed to individual fecklessness, the inferiority of a particular social category, discrimination, environmental barriers, unequal opportunities, etc, etc.

According to Spicker, "The only way to be sure that a policy is beneficial to the poor is to see what effect it has in practice" (1999, p160). This underlines the importance of empirical research to identify impact. Yet, this is hard to assess without a clear definition of starting point and an objective for change (which might or might not be defined by poor people) to measure it against. Both accurate and detailed description of the problem and comprehensive evaluation of policy are important because they shed light on underlying causes and hence appropriate redress. Together they enable theory about the causes of the problem to be refined and an appropriate strategic direction for policy to be charted.

Theory is particularly important in complex, contested environments where multiple conflicting interpretations are equally possible: "We need theories...because of *uncertainty* and *disagreement* about what justice requires of us" (Miller 2001, p21, his emphasis). Moreover, "Theoretical frameworks give us the tools with which to analyse patterns of thought and behaviour and to provide constructive challenges to competing explanatory frameworks" (Thompson 1988, p169). To attempt to deduce a 'big picture' from the myriad surface manifestations of disadvantage and exclusion at a time of rapid socio-cultural and economic change is likely to prove an overwhelming task. The only recourse is to plunge beneath the

surface to explore the theoretical foundations: “Only by abstracting from the complexities of the real world can we devise a conceptual schema that can illuminate it” (Fraser 1997, pp12-13).

Theory exists at different depths, or degrees of abstraction. At one end of the spectrum is theory concerned with describing principles for the basic structure of society as the necessary starting point from which all else flows, including principles for social justice. At the other, theory looks towards the implications for policy, and the feasibility of implementation ‘on the ground’. Theory may seek to develop new ways of understanding, without any intention that the resulting paradigm would straightforwardly be applied to policy and implemented, e.g. Rawls’ ‘veil of ignorance’ (1973). However, this may provide a steer for the development of theoretical approaches nearer the policy surface.

Theory may be shown to be inadequate in various ways. As it rises from abstraction, thinking through the practicalities may expose internal theoretical illogicalities, or additional factors for theory to take into account. Conceptual weaknesses may be contextual, in that a model is internally logical but becomes unworkable due to changes in the social context. However, weaknesses may also be inherent (whatever the level or degree of abstraction), i.e. there are intrinsic flaws in the premise on which they are based and their internal logic. Inherent weaknesses may only be exposed by contextual shift.

Theory, empirical evidence and social exclusion

It should not be assumed that behind its many manifestations there is but one underlying cause of social exclusion and the task is simply to disinter it. Even if shown to be so, it is indisputable that resulting social problems vary and thus a raft of action in different areas of policy may be required to address them. If social problems are multi-faceted, identities have multiple aspects or there is a series of differing interconnected problems, then a complex combination of actions may be required. If problems differ radically, then so will policies to address them. This is not to undermine the case for cogent theory to guide policy. It is to acknowledge that it would be a mistaken for cogency to be achieved at the price of imposing one possibility, when many are possible. Conversely, no matter how cogent the theory, if it allows for all possibilities it provides no steer for policy and is of little practical use.

Looking at empirical quantitative research into social exclusion there appears to be obvious reference to particular strands of theory about exclusion; that patterns of disadvantage can be identified over time, that different types of disadvantage ‘cluster’ together or that one form triggers others sequentially⁶. For example, Paugam (1995) revealed the interconnections between job insecurity and other forms of social disadvantage; Burchardt *et al.* (2002b) explored links between consumption, production, political engagement, and social interaction, while others have examined the longer-term impact of childhood poverty (e.g. Hobcraft 2003, Hobcraft and Kiernan 1999). The New Policy Institute’s annual series “Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion” (starting in 1999 – see Howarth *et al.*, and Palmer *et al.* 2005 for the most recent report) brings together wide-ranging indicators of disadvantage and tracks trends. Qualitative research can provide insights into experiences of disadvantage and expose underlying complexities. It can play an important role in developing and testing causal theory. Notwithstanding the evident usefulness of such studies, what is often less clear is whether they are exploring social exclusion as a new and distinct concept, cause, or expression of disadvantage, or whether they represent an increasingly sophisticated elaboration of poverty.

It may persuasively be argued that social policy development is not driven by theory, but instead by political imperatives to reduce public expenditure, enable tax cuts, promote economic growth and, of course, win elections. It may be made reactively in response to unforeseen events, used opportunistically to lend credence to pre-existing ideologically derived intentions or assumptions. In such cases, it may appear that theory has no role to play. Nevertheless, whether or not those responsible are conscious of it, whether or not *post hoc*, some form of theoretical underpinning is always discernible, even if just at a level of broad assumption.

The role, power and limitations of social policy

The broad aim of social policy is to promote social welfare or well-being. It sets out how the basics necessary for social welfare are to be provided, delineates the scope of publicly funded provision, the basis for access, assessments, decisions on entitlement, the availability (or otherwise) of redress, the nature of what is to be delivered, how it is to be delivered and by whom. In effect, it defines the relationship between citizen and state welfare institutions, traditionally through social rights. It can also play a key role in supporting relationships with the

labour market and the market more generally through providing cash benefits. While alternatives to public provision may anyway exist for those able to meet private sector access criteria, social policy also designates the role of the private or voluntary sectors in delivering public services. Social policy sets the parameters of private responsibility for welfare, e.g. through providing benefits to support child-rearing or to help meet the extra costs of disability, child protection services, compulsory school education and means tests. Where people are unable, or fail, to meet their responsibilities, social policy sets out the sanctions to be applied.

Social policy plays a pivotal role in promoting or impeding inclusion, operating at the boundary (or boundaries?) between exclusion and inclusion, supporting people who are ill-equipped to operate, or prevented from operating, in the market. The design and delivery of welfare goods and services, notably social security, employment services, education, health and community care services, are of critical importance. They can facilitate participation in wider society, or they can be dead-ends, reinforcing social exclusion with unnecessary segregation and failure to promote wider social connections. Even if they ultimately hold the key to inclusion, prospective recipients will avoid engaging with services if they confirm incapacity, invade privacy, and disempower.

Views about the power of state social policy to engineer social change diverge widely, as exemplified by commentators in the 'underclass' debate (see chapter 5). Murray asserts that: "...British social policy, unless radically changed, will systematically sustain the disintegration of the family in low income groups" (1996a, p117). Given his pro-market views, he attributes perhaps surprising power to social policy to engineer social change, and wreak social destruction. In contrast, Phillips believes that "... there are serious limits to what the state can do to change people's behaviour" (1996, p159). In effect, the debate is premised not just on disputes about the role and power of social policy but the motivations behind behaviours. As Alcock contends, individuals do not tend to base decisions about their future lives on narrow economic calculations, hence Murray's premise is flawed (1996). All this casts social policy as a form of social engineering; its effectiveness contingent on the accurate appreciation of behavioural levers, enabling incentives to be designed to induce desired behaviour.

There are political constraints on how radically policy can transform its starting point without serious repercussions for those currently depending on benefits and services and, hence, on the

politicians representing them. For example, to scrap the current Byzantine social security system and start afresh seems very appealing, but is something successive governments have never managed to do – for sound political reasons. Whatever their intentions, they have generally added to its complexity and cost rather the reverse. There are limits in the time-scale for reform dictated by the requirement to hold a General Election every five years. In a rapidly changing world, and given the imperative to respond to unforeseen external events, the capacity of any government to stick to a long-term strategy is questionable. There are limits to the extent of public spending likely to be tolerated by the electorate (particularly if this results in increased taxation), or by supranational institutions to which national governments are accountable, such as the European Commission.

There are limitations too inherent in policymaking processes. Theoretical models of these processes abound, each with their strengths and limitations⁷. As the literature contends, there is ample scope for links between policy and practice to be broken or distorted. It is not as straightforward as developing policy then implementing it accordingly: “Policies which are focused and direct are liable to have unintended consequences; policies which are not focused may still have beneficial effects” (Spicker 1999, p160). ‘Street-level bureaucrats’, responsible for delivering policy ‘on the ground’, may frustrate policy-makers’ intentions, reprioritizing or re-engineering policy to accommodate resource constraints or other objectives (Lipsky 1993; also Hogwood & Gunn 1993). It is therefore pertinent to consider not just the design but the delivery of welfare goods and services.

There may be other factors in the way that policy is made that result in poor quality – even ‘policy disasters’ (Dunleavy 1995). The speed and/ or lack of scrutiny of legislation, policy development by non-specialist surface-skimming civil servants, ineffective parliamentary checks and balances (particularly where the ruling party has a large majority), can all obviously compromise quality. However, such factors are not inevitable; they are constructed rather than logical limitations.

Whatever the limitations to national social policy, and whatever the doom-laden prophesies of globalisationists, there remains much that social policy can do to make a difference. The increasing recourse to piloting new initiatives in certain geographical areas, evaluating progress

and making comparisons with non-pilot areas, is just one way in which its impact can be demonstrated.

The thesis: challenges, approach and structure

Challenges

Preceding discussion suggests that social policy has still to catch up with its new environment. Social theory has still to make sense of that environment and steer a direction for policy. It seems likely that there are a range of constraints operating to impede the creation of an inclusive society:

“The truly ‘inclusive society’ does not exist outside the realms of theory. Segments of the population invariably lose out on ‘full citizenship rights’ on grounds of ‘race’, ethnicity, class, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, and so on” (Ratcliffe 2000, p181).

In view of the array of theoretical approaches (access to citizenship rights being but one) and lack of interconnections between them, not to mention the putative existence of logical limitations to inclusion, it seems safe to conclude that it does not exist in theory either. Clearly, in the current context, the challenges are substantial: “In a literal sense it seems obvious that organizations would find it impossible to solve the myriad of problems created by diverse social identities” (Ratcliffe 2000, p180). As discussed, further complexities are presented by the rapid pace of social change, shifting power structures and technological developments which bypass former space/ time constraints to information, communication, community formation, and financial exchanges.

This thesis sets out to explore whether it is possible, in the face of all this, to develop a cogent theoretical framework around inclusion and exclusion which *can* be translated into effective social policy. It is an admittedly ambitious task. Yet, through reframing and building on existing theory, reconceptualising society and acknowledging the many layers to identity, progress may be possible. A truly inclusive society may be a practical and logical impossibility, but there may nonetheless be much that could be done to make it more inclusive. Whether to reposition and

realign 'fragments' coherently amounts to a pointless attempt to establish a new metanarrative, is for postmodernists to debate. The possibility that a metanarrative can encompass and make sense of ever-changing fragmentation, and chart progress in terms of the inclusion and celebration of diversity, nonetheless seems well worthy of investigation. If the liberal market and traditional public sector models have outlived their usefulness, is it possible to develop a new model more fitting to the contemporary environment?

Research aim and approach

The overall research aim is to develop a coherent theoretical framework through which to identify the implications for the design and delivery of social policy, where the overall goal is to maximize the diversity that can be included into mainstream society. It needs to provide a better fit than is currently available between theory and contemporary and likely future social conditions, and enable greater consistency to policy direction. This will necessitate addressing the many challenges and limitations discussed above.

As implied by the range of discourses found under the banner of social exclusion, it seems reasonable to hypothesize that exclusion can result from a range of factors, key among which are likely to feature the many causes and manifestations of disadvantage. That is not to argue that exclusion and disadvantage are necessarily one and the same, although to be excluded is very likely to be disadvantageous, even if pre-existing disadvantage does not have to result in exclusion. It is, though, to suggest that in order to achieve the goal of this thesis, it is helpful to start by casting the net widely, to sift through existing theories to be found within discourses of social justice, poverty, discrimination and social exclusion – not that literature always fits neatly into one or other category. While the concerns addressed under these headings clearly remain relevant to today's social conditions, nowhere is it possible to find any concerted analysis of the interface between them. Thus, in order to get a purchase on the elusive concept of exclusion, it should be helpful to consider its relationship to approaches to disadvantage. This is not intended as an indepth literature review; the aim is to pull out key themes and identify any shared commonalities. It is proposed that the latter in turn might provide a platform on which to construct an over-arching, coherent theoretical framework. Through the process of theory development it is to be expected that new conceptualizations will emerge and that dilemmas and contradictions will logically arise which will require to be addressed.

On a possible spectrum of study, from theory to policy, thence to practice and finally to impact 'on the ground', this thesis will concentrate primarily on theory and, secondarily, consider its implications for policy. There will be discussion of theory operating at different levels, from the more abstract to theory located near the policy surface. It will not engage in empirical investigation beyond the discussion of policy documents. Neither will there be sufficient space here to conduct any indepth analysis of policy strategies and initiatives. Instead, the model for policy derived from the theoretical framework will be explored and illustration provided of how it might be used for such purposes.

Thesis structure

This introductory chapter has provided an overview of the background, current context for this study and ground to be covered. Section one, comprised of chapters 2-5, discusses the themes emerging from social justice, poverty, discrimination and social exclusion literatures, cross-refers between them and highlights insights acquired. Section two, comprised of chapters 6-9, pursues the development of an overarching theoretical framework and applies it to policy. The structures, processes and associated social relationships connecting macro to meso to micro level are theorized in chapters 6, 7 and 8 respectively. Chapter 9 considers the implications of the ensuing theoretical framework for social policy, both in signaling the direction for policy strategy and as a tool for analyzing and comparing policy initiatives. It shows how the new 'inclusive' model generated by the theoretical framework differs from liberal market and traditional public sector models. Finally, chapter 10 shows how the research aim has been met, pulls together key themes, assesses the distance traveled and signposts areas for further research.

¹ A discourse can be defined as referring to "...a set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images, stories, statements and so on that in some way produce a particular version of events" (Burr 1995, p48, cited in Thompson 1998, p68) or "...a historically evolved set of interlocking and mutually supporting statements, which are used to define and describe a subject matter" (Butler 2002, p44). A paradigm can be described as "...a constellation of beliefs, values, techniques and so on shared by the members of a given community..." or they may be "...concrete puzzle-solutions which, when employed as models or examples, can replace explicit rules as a basis for the solutions of the remaining puzzles of normal science" (Kuhn 1970, p175).

² In essence his assertion was that absolute poverty, in terms of what was required for survival, no longer existed and that the concept of relative poverty was meaningless.

³ This introduces a statutory duty on local government to have regard for equalities issues when it comes to 'Best Value'. It means authorities need to balance the quality of service provision against costs; achieve sustainable development; be accountable and transparent, by engaging with the local community; ensuring equal opportunities and continuously improving the outcomes of the services they provide.

⁴ Support with personal assistance can be obtained from local authorities via direct payments or 'Supporting People', Disabled Students Allowance (education), Access to Work (employment services) and Independent Living Funds, with funding from the Department for Work and Pensions and Northern Ireland authority. Distinctions are drawn between social, personal and nursing care.

⁵ The Equal Opportunities Commission, the Disability Rights Commission and the Commission for Racial Equality.

⁶ There is an abundance of datasets about the nature of disadvantage in Britain, such as the Labour Force Survey (LFS), the General Household Survey (GHS) and Households Below Average Income (HBAI) datasets. More recently, longitudinal datasets, particularly the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS), have enabled the fortunes of specific households to be tracked over time.

⁷ For example see Hill (1997) for discussion of systems and stages models (Easton 1965, Jenkins 1978), rational model and incremental models (Braybrooke and Lindblom 1963; also Smith and May 1993)

Section 1

Reviewing and Reframing Theories about Disadvantage and Exclusion

Chapter 2: Social Justice

Introduction

It is fitting to begin with discussion of social justice in that it provides an overarching goal and underpinning principles within which to locate the other subject areas to be discussed in this section. Furthermore, a clear conceptualization of social justice is needed to provide orientation to the subsequent development of the theoretical framework in section two.

There are two broad approaches to social justice found in the literature - whether dealing with distinct concepts of social justice, or merely examines different facets of the same phenomenon, will be explored. The first, the 'distributive paradigm', "...tends to focus on the possession of material goods and social positions", although some have gone beyond to include "...self-respect, opportunity, power and honor" (Young 1990, p8). The two most influential authors working within this paradigm are generally held to be John Rawls (1973) and Michael Walzer (1983). That is not to say their purposes are the same.

More recently, feminist authors (Fraser 1997, Young 1990, Phillips 1997), have drawn attention to the need for 'cultural recognition', if social justice is to be achieved. This refers to claims made by groups defined by a shared characteristic such as gender or race calling attention to their specificity and demanding affirmation of its value. The relationship between distributive justice and cultural recognition is potentially complex and is variously understood.

According to Young "A theory of justice typically derives fundamental principles of justice that apply to all or most societies, whatever their concrete configuration and social relations..." (1990, p3). She contrasts this with critical (social) theory, which is "...a normative reflection that is historically and socially contextualised" and where "...normative ideals used to criticize a society are rooted in experience of and reflection on that very society..." (1990, p5). Nonetheless, within the social justice literature it is possible to find theories at different levels of abstraction.

Distributive Justice

Overview

According to John Rawls: "...the nature and aims of a perfectly just society is the fundamental part of the theory of justice" (1973, p9). He is concerned to identify "...a standard whereby the distributive aspects of the basic structure of society are to be assessed" (1973, p9). A conception of justice is one aspect of a 'social ideal': "...a vision of the way in which the aims and purposes of social cooperation are to be understood" (1973, p9), i.e. society has other characteristics and other functions than distribution. Differing views about the aims and purposes of social co-operation engender differing conceptions of justice (and presumably differing conceptions pertaining to functions other than distribution). Rawls further distinguishes between a 'concept of justice', meaning "...a proper balance between competing claims..." and a 'conception of justice', meaning "...a set of related principles for identifying the relevant considerations which determine this balance" (1973, p10). Rawls is concerned with the latter, offering "...an account of certain distributive principles for the basic structure of society" (1973, p10).

To that end he postulates an idealized, self-contained society where moral judgments on principles for distribution are made from the 'original position', from behind a 'veil of ignorance' (1973). His argument is premised on the notion that rational people will draw the same conclusions about principles for distribution, providing they have no knowledge of their own personal characteristics or status and are thus obliged to omit self-interest from deliberations. Instead of prescribing what principles for just distribution should be, he attempts to identify the conditions necessary for reaching just conclusions about such principles. This is not an attempt to prescribe in practical terms how distribution should occur or to set a blueprint for policy. He is not arguing that such conditions can be achieved in the real world, but that the conclusions of such a thought experiment have relevance to the real world, in providing a framework for understanding more immediate concerns: "The reason for beginning with ideal theory is that it provides, I believe, the only basis for the systematic grasp of...more pressing problems" (1972, p9).

Moving along the theory spectrum towards more practical considerations, Michael Walzer (1983) focuses on the cumulative effects of unjust distribution. His basic argument is that goods

are justly distributed when distributed according to criteria consistent with their purpose. Instead, possession of a 'dominant' good can act as a passport to inappropriate acquisition, thereby compounding inequality. For example, distribution is unjust if superior education gives access to superior health-care (education here being a dominant good).

Miller in a more recent work on distributive justice, describes the central issue for social justice as "...how the good and bad things in life should be distributed among the members of human society" (2001, p1). Although generally operating at a similar level of abstraction to Walzer, he proposes that it is the 'mode' of human relationship and associated principle (solidarity, instrumental association or citizenship) which determines just distribution. There are intrinsic weaknesses to the theory he expounds, as briefly explored below. However, the emphasis on relationships is potentially helpful, this being a key theme in social exclusion theory, and inclusion being the key theme of this thesis.

To summarise, whatever their differences in purpose and degree of abstraction, distributive theorists collectively are concerned with such matters as the nature of 'goods', the identification of just principles for their distribution, how this translates into criteria for distribution, the dynamics or accumulative impact of distribution, the theoretical conditions under which sound judgments about distributive principles can be achieved and the social conditions required for the implementation of distributive justice. Key components of distributive theory will now be discussed in more detail.

Defining 'goods' and access criteria

The first challenge is to define the advantages or goods to be distributed. Rawls identifies 'primary goods' as "...rights and liberties, opportunities and power, income and wealth..." (1973, p92). These goods are necessary to pursue a variety of ends: whatever their personal goals, people can be assumed to want more of them. For Walzer, distributions are of "...membership, power, honor, ritual and eminence, divine grace, kinship and love, knowledge, wealth, physical security and leisure, rewards and punishments..." and, more mundanely, "...food, shelter, clothing, transportation, medical care, commodities of every sort..." (1983, p3). Miller suggests that a preliminary list of advantages must include "...money and commodities, property, jobs and offices, education, medical care, child benefits, honors and prizes, personal

security, housing, transportation and leisure opportunities.” Disadvantages, or burdens which are not punishments, include “...military service, hard dangerous or degrading work, and care for the elderly” (2001, p7).

Walzer (1983) argues that there are different ‘spheres’ of distribution, and that different principles for just distribution apply to each: “...different social goods ought to be distributed for different reasons, in accordance with different procedures, by different agents, and...all those differences derive from different understandings of the social goods themselves...” (1983, p6). Furthermore, “All distributions are just or unjust relative to the social meanings of the goods at stake” (1983, p9). Injustice arises when the principles for distribution fail to respect, even undermine, the meaning of the good in question, and goods are distributed for ‘irrelevant’ reasons. For example, “Money is inappropriate in the sphere of ecclesiastical office; it is an intrusion from another sphere” (1983, p10).

There may be significant practical drawbacks to ignoring criteria, or choosing criteria irrelevant to the purpose:

“...even though it might be gratifying to obtain a job for which one has no qualifications on the basis of a vote among the other employees, this would have to be offset against the drawback that the schools (and the universities), the banks and the shops, the firms and the public services would all be run by people who had got where they were without needing any qualifications” (Barry 2001, p327).

There may also be personal costs to individuals, who find themselves without the necessary skills and knowledge to perform well, yet nonetheless responsible for negative outcomes.

It is thus important that the criteria for accessing a good, or the manner of the good’s distribution, are consistent with the purpose or social meaning of the good. Subject to this, access criteria will vary:

“...there has never been a single criterion, or single set of interconnected criteria, for all distributions. Desert, qualification, birth and blood, friendship, need, free exchange, political loyalty, democratic decision: each has had its place, along with many others...” (Walzer 1983, p4).

The fact that there *are* criteria remains constant, although they may or may not be explicitly expressed and assessed, and they may or may not be consistent with the good's purpose (even if a person got a job on the basis of other employees' votes, those employees would still be selecting by some form of criteria).

It can be argued that those cited by Walzer are not all criteria themselves. Some, such as desert or need, can be seen as qualities relating to the purposes of a good which criteria are designed to demonstrate. It is necessary to translate the purpose of a good into something tangible – to identify indicators – in order to make sound judgments about who should have access to what. Others, like free exchange or friendship, describe a type of societal relationship, where access may hinge on the endorsement of certain criteria, whether or not explicit, publicly or privately determined. Walzer also suggests “The idea of distributive justice has as much to do with being and doing as with having...” (1983, p3). It follows that criteria for access to societal relationships and consequent distributions may not just be concerned with what a person has, but with what they do and are – or appear to be. Access may not depend on material resources, but on how relevant aspects of identity are selected, identified and understood. This begins to suggest that accurate recognition plays an important role in just distribution.

If distributive justice hinges on the consistency of criteria for distribution with the social meaning and purpose of the good, clarification of the latter becomes critically important. According to Walzer “...distributions are patterned in accordance with shared conceptions of what the goods are and what they are for” (1983, p7). The conception of goods precedes and determines their distribution. He acknowledges scope for variation in social meaning, over time and in different societies, while arguing that meanings are shared because “...conception and creation are social processes” (1983, p7). However, it is debatable whether this sufficiently accounts for the potentially vast variation, not just between but within multicultural societies. Even within one and the same culture, the meaning of goods will differ, depending on setting. Thus, in Christian culture, bread in a church means something very different to bread on a restaurant table¹. Its purpose is quite different. Its meaning and purpose can be primarily symbolic, or can reside in the good's practical use. Moreover, the objectives of the differently placed people responsible for its production, distribution and consumption can all vary massively. This is not to argue that any degree of consensus on social meaning is impossible to establish, and thus so too is the justice of distributional arrangements. It does, though, suggest

that consensus cannot be assumed. It implies that for a distribution to be just, or perceived as such, account needs to be taken of the perspectives of different stakeholders.

There are additional reasons why the relationship between the social meaning of a good and criteria for access is not necessarily clear-cut. Goods can be comprised of combinations of characteristics. A job (as an example of a 'good') will have a purpose, described by the tasks judged necessary to fulfill it, their quantity and quality, the skills required to perform them, and where and when they are to be performed. It may be, though, that the job's purpose could be fulfilled many ways, and/ or that the descriptors of tasks, skills, location, etc, do not accurately reflect that purpose, but instead are founded on assumptions based on cultural norms. It may be possible to alter job components but still end up with much the same product while increasing access options. There may be many routes to the same destination. Put another way, at what point does bread become cake? Can cake adequately meet the purpose of bread?

Williams (1969) provides further insights into the nature of goods and associated dynamics, in the context of discussion around the practical difficulties of achieving equality. He contends that goods may be unavoidably scarce (goods which not all the people who desire them can have) – and hence inimical to equality - in three different ways. Firstly, goods such as "...positions of prestige, management, etc are *by their very nature* limited..." (1969, p165, his emphasis). It is worth considering how this might sit with Walzer's advocacy of "complex equality". The implication might be that, while a person may have a position of prestige in one setting, it should not predispose them to having one in another. Secondly, some goods are 'contingently limited': "...there are certain conditions of access to them which in fact not everyone satisfies but there is no intrinsic limit to the numbers who might gain access..." (1969, p166). University education is the example given. Here, the implication is not so much that the good is scarce, but that there are limitations to the numbers of people meeting criteria for access. Of course, it may be possible to relax criteria in order to open up access, although beyond a certain point this might change the meaning of the good. It may also be that university education is more accurately (or additionally) a form of positional good in that its worth (or prestige) resides in its exclusivity. Thirdly, there are goods which are 'fortuitously limited': "...although everyone or large numbers of people satisfy the conditions of access to them, there is just not enough to go round..." (1969, p166). National Health Service provision might be an appropriate example.

Particular conceptual (let alone operational) difficulties arise with 'intangible' goods such as power and self-esteem. Clearly, these are not goods that can literally be distributed by institutions, even if they may distribute roles with powers attached to them and the result is an increase in self-esteem. Understandings of power are particularly complex. There are important distinctions between the powers which technically go with a role and the powers people in technically powerful roles are able to exercise. The latter may be contingent on external factors, such as organizational structures, culture and politics. For example, the power of a Prime Minister may be associated with the size of parliamentary majority. Personal qualities, such as skill-levels, knowledge, 'charisma' (or lack of it), can also be significant factors.

A further difficulty in quantifying power is that it can operate in different ways. It may be overtly expressed, in that A forces B to behave, or prevents B from behaving, in ways B would choose. However, it may operate imperceptibly, where action occurs but the perpetrator is not obvious and no one (or the wrong person) is held accountable. Power can also prevent attention being drawn to issues that are inconvenient for the powerful, through managing agendas so that no one becomes aware that the issue is there (see Lukes 1993 on the overt, covert and latent operations of power).

While Williams (1969) describes power as a 'positional good', others highlight its role as a potentially fluctuating feature of social relationships (Young 1990). For some, power is not best conceived as an entity that people either have or do not have, but a property of interactions between individuals (Foucault 1980, 1981). It can even be understood as constituting individual identity, perhaps implying that identity is constituted through interaction: "...the conflicting languages of power which circulate through and within individuals actually constitute the self" (Butler 2002, p51). Sibeon perceives it as 'emergent' "...in the sense of being an *outcome* of social interactions...Actors may become more powerful, or less powerful: this is because their capacity to shape events or to obtain their objectives is not a structurally bestowed, predetermined or 'fixed' capacity" (1992, p35, cited in Thompson 1998, p76). Yet it may also be a precursor to social interactions, with the powerful setting out how they are to proceed.

Powerful positions may reify an otherwise fluid phenomenon, turning power into a 'thing'. Similarly, Rawls (1973) conceptualizes self-respect as a good, while Sen (1983) portrays it (in terms of being able to live without shame) as a capability, or 'absolute need' (see chapter 3). The

relationship between tangible and intangible goods, the point at which an intangible 'good' becomes a quality of interaction, the intangible qualities of tangible goods, are worthy of exploration. Certainly, for a thesis concerned with empowerment, a conceptualization of the nature and operation of power is likely to be important.

Distributive relationships

The distinctions between issues of relationships and the nature and distribution of goods as 'things' is tackled (if somewhat incompletely) by Miller (2001). He identifies three modes of human relationship, each associated with a principle of justice: solidarity (need), instrumental association (desert) and citizenship (equality), the idea being that "...a certain mode of relationship may be required to make a principle of justice *feasible* to use" (2001, p34). Yet, it is unclear why principles could not be fulfilled by different modes. Why should need not be met via 'instrumental association' (broadly, commercial transaction on the basis of desert) or citizenship rights? Furthermore it seems quite possible for principles and modes to co-exist within one and the same relationship. For example, an employer might appoint an employee for a combination of reasons. Consequently it is hard to grasp what would constitute injustice.

It is possible (although Miller does not say so) that the key is for both parties to share an understanding of the basis of the relationship. A person may be appointed for nepotistic reasons (solidarity) while believing they were appointed for instrumental reasons (desert) – i.e. because they were the best candidate for the job. Once revealed, trust breaks down and the power balance shifts, jeopardizing the relationship. On a bigger scale, this would have implications for social cohesion, and for inclusion, if contingent on participation in key relationships (like employment).

Distributive consequences

Rawls notes that goods or the lack of them tend to go together, that greater powers and wealth often co-exist, as do lack of authority and lack of income. Walzer's answer to the perpetuation and exacerbation of inequalities, the natural dynamic of such clustering, is to argue for 'complex equality' which: "...establishes a set of relationships such that domination is impossible", so that "...no citizen's standing in one sphere or with regard to some social good can be undercut by his

standing in some other sphere, with regard to some other good” (1983, p19). This prevents the emergence of a ‘dominant good’, i.e. one which gives access to other goods, irrespective of relevance to their social meaning.

This signals an underlying supposition that goods and their purposes are inherently different. It is questionable whether this is always so. Without compromising purpose, are there some qualities, e.g. intelligence, reliability, loyalty, which are legitimately transferable, perhaps valued in a commercial as much as in an ecclesiastical setting? Is it safe to assume that, having been proven in one context, they will likewise prevail in another? While it is clear that some qualities are specific to a good, and should not act as a passport to receipt of un-related goods (e.g. wealth to ecclesiastical status, educational status to superior health-care), others appear more generic. Further analysis may reveal the real scope for ‘complex equality’ – i.e. the balance between generic and specific attributes required for access to different goods with different purposes. This is likely to be important, if the concern is to maximize social cohesion around those aspects of understandings, values and norms which are shared, while simultaneously maximizing the inclusion of people with diverse characteristics. It also follows that for complex equality to pertain, different goods, social meanings, and associated personal qualities, must be equally valued. The principle of ‘different yet equally valued’ seems likely to be extremely important to the quest to maximize the inclusion of diversity.

Taken together, it seems that dynamics ensue from the balance between supply and demand, the extent to which it is feasible to balance them, and the use of rationing in order to manipulate the relationship between them. It is not always possible to increase the supply of a good, neither is it necessarily possible to increase the supply of suitably qualified potential users without changing the meaning of the good or undermining its purpose. Furthermore, the more available the good, the less it will have ‘positional’ value, and the less desirable it will become. There are some goods which by their very nature cannot be equally distributed without compromising that good’s essential nature and changing its meaning. However, the fact that positional goods can exist in different, discrete settings may provide scope for ‘complex equality’. All of this provides another slant on why distribution cannot be straightforward and why judgments about distribution have to be made.

Limitations and constraints

For distributive paradigms of social justice to be theoretically feasible and for it to be possible to re/distribute at a practical level, certain conditions must prevail. For Rawls' (1973), the theoretical conditions to identify just distributive principles require a bounded, closed system, in the form of a self-contained national community. Walzer states that "The idea of distributive justice presupposes a bounded world within which distribution takes place" (1983, p31). This is echoed by Miller, apparently concerned here with more practical questions of distributive feasibility, who envisages: "...a bounded society with a determinate membership, forming a universe of distribution" (2001, p4). Walzer also stresses the importance of the social meanings of goods: "All distributions are just or unjust relative to the social meanings of the goods at stake" (1983, p9), while Miller draws attention to the need for a broad consensus about the social value of a range of goods (2001). Other conditions are that there must be a set of institutions (with the state the primary institution) which distribute rights and duties and apportion the advantages of social co-operation (Rawls 1973). It must be possible to apply the principles of social justice to such institutions and trace their impact on individuals (Miller 2001). It must also be possible to reform institutions in light of favoured theory (Miller 2001).

As previously remarked, theories are developed in reflection and interpretation of their contemporaneous social context. Weaknesses may only become apparent when viewed outside it. To look back at the conditions for distributive justice from the vantage point of an era where national boundaries have become increasingly permeable and multiculturalism an accepted (if not necessarily accommodated) feature of Western societies raises obvious questions. Our society is not bounded into a self-contained universe of distribution. Supranational, national, regional and local institutions – right down to family units - all have distributive roles with regard to designated forms of good. Distribution occurs through state and market institutions. Relationships between them and between institutions at different levels are often complex. The interplay of power can be fluid and subject to negotiation. The ability to trace the path between the action of an institution and its impact on individuals may consequently be compromised.

With increased migration and social mobility, membership of any given society or community has become less fixed. People can simultaneously hold membership of many different communities (e.g. an individual might simultaneously be European, British, Scottish and Asian,

they may be a member of a work-based community, and a community founded on place of residence). The co-existence of different cultural communities suggests that consensus on meanings of goods may be less certain. Even where understandings are shared, the significance of goods may differ for individuals (e.g. child-care can be expected to be more significant to those with primary child-rearing roles than those without). As Miller contends: "...we must eventually ask ourselves whether our existing world has not already passed beyond these circumstances" (2001, p6), i.e. circumstances prerequisite for distributive justice.

In addition to potential weaknesses created by contextual changes, there are inherent weaknesses to some of the above. Firstly, institutions do not always have the power to distribute, let alone redistribute, some of the goods identified as pertinent to social justice. For example, it is hard to see how any institution could re/distribute 'divine grace' (although certain roles may be associated with this quality), or 'kinship and love' (although they may be sanctioned by institutions in the form of marriages or christenings). Similarly, goods such as knowledge or physical security lie beyond the province of any institution to distribute in a literal sense. While they may distribute educational or policing resources to make such outcomes more likely, outcomes cannot be guaranteed. Secondly, as flagged in chapter 1, it is debatable whether the relationship between policy intention, policy output and outcome can ever be guaranteed. No matter how clearly articulated the principles of social justice are, and how well they are reflected in institutional policy and practice, extraneous factors may intervene to throw outcomes off course. Thirdly, it cannot be assumed that just distribution of goods is sufficient for social justice. To have goods does not necessarily mean that a person is able to profit from them. There may still be barriers to participation, or inclusion into membership. Drawing on Walzer's formulation, such barriers may be attributable not to what a person has, but due to what they do or are – or are perceived to be.

There may be even more fundamental problems. In opposition to an emphasis on 'fair' distribution, Nozick's (1974) starting point is to develop a theory of entitlement. This defines a 'just distribution' as one where 'holdings' are justly acquired, and can be justly transferred, either in exchange for something else or as a gift. Enforced transference – including stealing, slavery, the seizing of products - is unjust. On that basis, "...taxation of earnings from labor is on a par with forced labor..." (1974, p169). Justice hinges on how something is acquired, not the resulting pattern of distribution. According to Nozick, attempts to 'pattern' distribution,

whether according to moral merit, need, marginal product or effort, are anyway doomed to failure: "...no end-state principle or distributional patterned principle of justice can be continuously realized without continuous interference with people's lives" (1974, p163). Even if equality of resources is achieved by one distribution, natural dynamics towards inequality mean that to maintain equality requires repeated intervention, appropriation and redistribution of holdings. The principle of entitlement is not patterned, because holdings (justly) arise in a wide variety of ways, even if strands or patterns run through. In effect, he argues against the imposition of any collectively or institutionally-devised criteria for distribution, relying instead on personal choice.

Nozick also challenges the notion that activities (and presumably by the same token 'goods') have an 'internal goal' such that "...the only proper grounds for the performance of the activity, or its allocation if it is scarce, are connected with the effective achievement of the internal goal" (1974, p233), e.g. medical care should only be distributed in relation to medical need. Nozick argues that this ignores where the thing or action comes from, overlooking the goals and choices available to the medical care-giver, who justly is 'entitled' to her/ his own actions, and should therefore have choice over criteria for their deployment.

These are important points. Yet it amounts to a denial of the possible justness of (or case for) collective action, or that collective views expressed through democratic processes can legitimize actions that would otherwise be 'unjust' in Nozick's terms. For him, social justice is almost a contradiction in terms, because justice is inherently an individual concern. Interestingly, while rejecting macro or collective level constraints to individual choices, Nozick does not acknowledge that individuals' choices are likely to reflect the cultural norms pervading collectivities, imbuing value to certain goods, activities or characteristics, and devaluing others – whether or not on a basis of stereotype, ignorance or lack of awareness of alternatives. Notwithstanding the improbability of perfect information being attainable, if choices are made on an avoidably ill-informed basis, can they be just?

Nozick does not discuss the relationship between inclusion and equality and it remains unclear whether inclusion too would be viewed as unsustainable. It is notable that Nozick takes a narrow view of inequality, discussing it in terms of material possessions/ income and skills or talents, with natural inequalities in the latter repeatedly giving rise to inequalities in capacity to acquire

material goods. Yet inequalities can be of many sorts – of power, respect, free time, information, mobility. To address these requires a variety of actions, extending well beyond any distribution of material possessions/ income. Indeed, when it comes to power, Nozick's approach seems destined to concentrate it in the hands of those who already possess it, rather than empower those without it. Neither does he acknowledge structural barriers which create inequalities, prevent exchanges from occurring, or skills from being acquired. Nonetheless, if Nozick is saying that redistributing income and wealth in order to equalize them is not by itself going to achieve equality in the longer term, he is undoubtedly correct.

Cultural Recognition

Overview

More recently, a new way of thinking about social justice has emerged. Although discussed alongside distributive paradigms, it is not necessarily seen as a development of them, but as an alternative to them. An emphasis on the importance of cultural recognition has arisen, with "...the cultural displacing the material..." (Phillips 1997, p143) as "...group identity supplants class interest as the chief medium of political mobilization" (Fraser 1997, p11). Whether cultural recognition is unconnected to issues of redistribution, or how they might be intertwined, needs to be established. The meaning of cultural recognition also requires clarification.

Group identities

The construction and deconstruction of group identities has been widely debated in feminist literature, and also in postmodernist theory more generally. Young defines a social group as "...a collective of persons differentiated from at least one other group by cultural forms, practices, or way of life" (1990, p43). They are an "...expression of social relations...", through which group identification arises "...in the encounter and interaction between social collectivities that experience some differences in their way of life and forms of association, even if they regard themselves as belonging to the same society" (1990, p43).

Many questions arise: whether individuals constitute group or groups constitute individual identities; the extent to which group membership is chosen; how 'solid' or permeable is the group. Is it just a loosely-constructed network? How homogenous is any group, given that members will have many attributes additional to the one/s on which the group is founded? If groups are founded around a given attribute, and individuals have many attributes, it follows that they can be members of many groups:

"In complex, highly differentiated societies like our own, all persons have multiple group identifications. The culture, perspective, and relations of privilege and oppression of these various groups, moreover, may not cohere." (Young 1990, p48)

This has implications for the coherence of individual identity. Yet, it can be argued that the implications need not be negative or even incoherent, particularly if accumulative effects (i.e. a lack of 'complex equality') apply to privilege and oppression. Another way of framing this is to say that, because individuals have multiple aspects to their identities and can operate in a variety of settings, each can belong to more than one group at a time without there being any inherent tension or contradiction. It is entirely possible, indeed inevitable, for a person to have characteristics which are 'the same' as another's and 'different' to another's. Nonetheless, Young does not pursue the implications, perhaps reluctant to lose sight of groups in the wake of a more general societal push towards individualism. Generally the focus remains on sub-categories within groups, e.g. that the group 'women' includes black women, disabled women, lesbian women, etc, alongside recognition of the related (but separate) movements of black people, disabled people and lesbian and gay people.

Groups can be defined (whether the definition is actively chosen by group members, or externally imposed) not only by shared experiences arising from shared characteristics, such as gender or race, but as classes defined by position in the political economy. Fraser describes gender and race as 'bivalent modes of collectivity', in that each contains both cultural and socio-economic components (not all groups are 'bivalent', e.g. groups defined by sexual orientation may have cultural but not associated socio-economic 'class' components). While there may be associations between the two in that people sharing a certain characteristic may typically be found in certain parts of the labour market and income distribution, this is not inevitable. Furthermore, shared experience goes beyond the labour market: "Gender affinities, if they exist,

could have additional bases beyond their basis in the division of labour, for example in socialization, in culture, even in bodily experiences, such as menstruation” (Fraser 1997, p201).

Approaches to difference

Fraser, referring to Young (1990), identifies four approaches to difference. It may be regarded as a manifestation of oppression rather than a cause of it, in that oppression stunts the development of skills, etc. It could be a mark of superiority over the oppressors, for example, qualities like feminine nurturance. Difference may be neither inferior nor superior: “...we can make normative judgements about the relative value of alternative norms, practices, and interpretations, judgements that could lead to conclusions of inferiority, superiority, and equivalent value” (Fraser 1997, p204). A further possibility is that difference is simply denied: what Taylor referred to as ‘difference’ blindness’. This in itself may be a form of oppression: “Non-recognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted mode of being” (Taylor 1992, p25).

Difference is not necessarily relevant. A person may possess characteristics both relevant and irrelevant to a given setting or purpose of a good. For example, ‘feminine nurturance’ (casting aside for the moment legitimate debate about whether nurturance is anyway a distinguishing feminine characteristic) may be just what is required in one setting; irrelevant or even counter-productive in another. Williams stresses that reasons for differential treatment must be relevant: “...the fact that a man is black is, *by itself*, quite irrelevant to the issue of how he should be treated in respect of welfare, etc” (1969, p156, my emphasis). If women are differently socialized and if they menstruate the question is whether such differences are *relevant* to economic performance. If they are not relevant, then unequal treatment cannot be justified, notwithstanding the fact that women are different to men.

In determining relevance, it is important to consider not just the qualities of the potential recipient but also the purpose of ‘the good’ and its setting. As discussed, it may be possible to restructure a job in order to accommodate difference while preserving its purpose. Adjustments to the environment where it is delivered, forms of communication or the way in which tasks are organized (e.g. the degree of flexibility about when they are performed) might open up access by removing irrelevant barriers. This can transform an ostensibly relevant difference into an

irrelevant one. How to discern relevant from irrelevant is what recognition is really about. To use disabilist terminology, it is possible not just to be 'difference-blind' (Taylor 1992) but also 'sameness-blind' (Witcher 2003): blinded by one over-riding but irrelevant indicator of difference. It is also possible to be blind to the scope to reframe the good in order to accommodate difference.

Difference is not necessarily fixed: "Class inequality lent itself to a strategy of elimination: a notion that the differences will disappear when the differences are gone" (Phillips 1997, p143). At its simplest, this is to argue that inequalities experienced by socio-economic classes can be eliminated by redistributing income and wealth. Other forms of difference and ensuing group definitions are less amenable to erasure (Phillips 1997, Fraser 1997). However, the extent and nature of group differentiation can be affected by strategies for addressing inequality. Some serve to affirm difference, accentuating it through targeting resources, while others diminish its relevance by transforming the socio-cultural context which defines it. The resulting destabilization of group differentiation enables new groupings subsequently to emerge (Fraser 1997).

An attempt at reframing groups is to be found in 'Justice and the Politics of Difference' (Young 1990). She combines factors connected to the political economy with those concerned with cultural recognition into what she terms the 'five faces of oppression': exploitation; marginalization; powerlessness; cultural imperialism and violence. This is intended as a means of diffusing squabbles between different groups about whose oppression is 'primary', in that all may experience the various forms of oppression. According to Fraser (1997) this amounts to an attempt to meld together redistribution (political economy) with recognition paradigms. She claims that they remain poorly integrated and essentially bipartite.

Whatever its weaknesses, this represents an attempt to resolve apparent contradictions through reframing understanding, to identify commonalities which cross-sect and thus have potential to unify, or at least increase scope for recognition across cultural divides. This approach seems worthy of further exploration, given the concern is to promote inclusion and cohesion.

Scope and limitations of cultural recognition

The notion that the shared characteristic around which groups are formed is either socio-economic class position or the particular culture associated with particular personal characteristics (gender, disability, ethnicity, etc), is clearly subject to challenge. True, to define culture is far from straightforward. Kymlicka (1995) equates it with 'a nation' or 'a people'; definitions which seem to presuppose a geographical or ethnic connection. Culture might also refer to shared values, norms and expectations around roles, appearance, customary activities and life-style. It is entirely possible that groups will be based on such characteristics, without the group possessing a cultural identity as such. Neither must damaging misrecognition necessarily only pertain to matters of culture. It may stem from a wide variety of inaccurate assumptions, or inadequate indicators of identity. It is obvious that cultural issues, so defined, apply more persuasively to some groups than others. For example, disabled people may constitute a meaningful social category, but do not necessarily share any such cultural connection. This is not to deny that groups (including disabled people) cannot or do not develop their own culture, as signified in music, art, theatre, discourse and perhaps lifestyles, but that it is not this which is being misrecognised. Furthermore:

“Even if we want to say that there is a women’s culture, a black culture or a gay culture, the extent to which members of the group identify with such a distinctive group culture varies greatly from one member to another” (Barry 2001, p307).

It seems improbable that unjustifiably disadvantageous treatment or oppression is on account of the *cultural* distinctiveness of a group: “...it is not black culture that the racist disdains, but blacks. There is no conflict of visions between black and white cultures that is the source of racial discord” (Appiah 1997, p36, cited in Barry 2001, p306). As Barry puts it:

“...we can identify people as women, blacks or gays without having to know anything much about their culture...discrimination may well be based on sheer identity as a woman, a black or a gay rather than on any associated cultural attributes” (Barry 2001, pp306, 307).

Criticising Young’s approach as the ‘culturalization’ of group identities, Barry points out:

“...groups can suffer from material deprivation, lack of equal opportunity and direct discrimination, and there is no reason for supposing these disadvantages to flow from their possession of a distinctive culture, even where they have one...” (2001. p315).

Social injustice as misrecognition therefore extends well beyond purely matters of cultural difference.

Where a characteristic such as disability is detectable, it may trigger all manner of inaccurate assumptions about ability, roles and so on. The disabled person's very identity may be misrecognised. Such 'cultural misrecognition' does not emanate from the particular culture of disabled people, but is imposed on them by the culture of whoever is responsible for misrecognition. Different cultures may have very different expectations about disabled people, and disabled people themselves may originate from different cultural backgrounds. Moreover, it may be that the dominant culture accords inferior status, or stereotypes inaccurately, people with particular characteristics, or it may be that negative attitudes are held by individuals irrespective of wider cultural norms.

If a narrow focus on culture is adopted, the debate shifts to discussion of the scope and limitations of multiculturalism: the claims of particular groups to 'special' treatment, such as exemption from the rules pertaining to the wider collectivity in which they are located. It may be that, irrespective of recognition, accommodation is logically limited, or socially undesirable. Direct discrimination, overtly inferior or violent treatment, may not occur across different cultures, but rather within cultural groupings. Cultures may regard women as innately inferior, depriving them of access to political decision-making, and denying them access to education and employment. Homosexuality may be viewed with great hostility, and disability regarded as shameful. Some cultures practice the mutilation of children, or the stoning of adulterers. Such behaviours come into direct conflict with laws prevailing in liberal societies. Multiculturalism could mean turning over powers of collective decision-making whole-sale to illiberal groups. It insists that "...liberal protections for individuals should be withdrawn wherever they interfere with a minority's ability to live according to its culture", with women, children and dissidents the likely victims (Barry 2001, p327).

Of course, not all differences are mutually incompatible in such direct, non-negotiable ways. It may be that the conflict concerns the wearing of a turban for cultural reasons versus wearing a helmet or hard-hat for safety reasons; wearing religious garb which is not part of a school uniform; slaughtering meat in the particular manner deemed necessary by a given religion, which others regard it as inhumane (Barry 2001). Such instances require negotiation, but

compromise may be possible without too great a loss to either party. Moving up a level, it may be that people have time-constraints, because religious activities fall on a particular day, or they have caring responsibilities, or limited stamina due to impairment. These are factors which most service-providers or employers should reasonably be able to accommodate without necessarily experiencing any or much loss, and possibly experiencing gains, e.g. by opening up access to new customers or by acquiring or retaining skilled staff. Finally, there are examples of services, etc where the main logical limit is in the number of available customers or possible venues, e.g. it may be that we end up with a greater variety of restaurants providing different traditional cuisines, rather than the same number providing for the same one, or it may mean there are more restaurants and more people choose to eat out, or have the option of eating out and that everyone has more choice.

Multiculturalism, or rather misunderstandings of it, may "...destroy the conditions for putting together a coalition in favour of across-the-board equalization of opportunities and resources" (Barry 2001, p325). If multiculturalism is understood in separatist terms, this suggests another way in which cultural recognition could work against distributive justice. It may also work against social inclusion and social cohesion.

Implications for distributive justice

Fraser (1997) argues that both socio-economic redistribution and cultural recognition are required for justice, but that they constitute distinct analytical paradigms. Whereas redistributive injustice results in exploitation, economic marginalization into low paid, undesirable work (or unemployment), and deprivation, cultural or symbolic injustice is discernible in social patterns of representation, interpretation and communication. It can mean cultural domination, non-recognition and disrespect. Despite their differences, she argues, the two paradigms of justice are intertwined. They are, nonetheless, in tension with each other – "the redistribution-recognition dilemma" (1997, p13). To summarise, this revolves around claims made by groups defined by a shared characteristic like gender or race, calling attention to their specificity or difference and affirmation of its value, alongside the aim in the economic sphere of promoting de-differentiation, as in feminist demands for the abolition of the gender division of labour. To make claims simultaneously on grounds of difference and sameness, she argues, would seem contradictory. Yet recognition of difference in an economic context leads to justifiable inequities

in access to employment and labour-market segmentation, i.e. inequitable (and therefore unjust?) distributive outcomes.

Going beyond an emphasis on recognition of difference, it appears that socially just distribution cannot occur *without* accurate recognition of whether or not what is presented conforms to the purpose of the good. Indeed, perhaps the purpose of the good can only be fully understood once questioned from a variety of angles, i.e. when different ways of meeting it are explored. A consequence of recognition may be refinement/ modification/ adjustment of the good and, consequently, adjustments to its appropriate distribution. To that extent, recognition, albeit of a more comprehensive order than that advocated by 'cultural recognition' theorists, is a refinement of redistribution.

It can further be argued that the purpose of the good cannot be determined in isolation from its cultural context. Cultural recognition is also about recognizing that there may be different meanings and values to goods, relevant criteria and indicators. Even if meanings were held constant, it could be argued that whether Rawls' identification of rights and liberties, opportunities and power, income and wealth as primary goods is the product of a particular cultural context. Would a rational person not imbued in Western, liberal, capitalist culture value these above other goods? Are these necessarily the routes in all cultures to the accumulation of more goods? Do they necessarily 'cluster' in the same way? For example, it could be argued that in some cultures founded on a political or religious creed, conformity rather than liberty is the route to power. Income, wealth and power may – quite rationally - be viewed as corrupting and hence undesirable. Without cultural recognition – even of a 'closed society' - it is impossible to know what the consensus is about the social meaning of a good – one of the prerequisites for just distribution.

This signals how fair distribution and accurate recognition can be interconnected. Another approach, if there is to be an over-arching framework, would be to consider what fair distribution and recognition are both necessary for; what can be prevented if either are absent. Fraser's notion of 'parity of participation' (2003) seems to fit the bill. By parity, she does not intend to suggest equality in a rigid sense, but that participants should interact as peers. If Walzer's notion of complex equality is added to the mix, it becomes conceptually clearer how people may have different but equally valued characteristics and resources to contribute. There

may be many different ways of acquiring the same amount of status, respect and power, perhaps in different settings, or for different but equally useful skills to exist in the same setting. This clearly has implications for inclusion.

Conclusion

Social justice theory spans concerns with distribution, including the basis for decisions on distribution, the need for criteria to be relevant to the purpose of distribution and/ or understandings of the good in question, who should be included in the 'membership' among whom distribution (or redistribution) is to occur and how relevant criteria for membership, or criteria for access to particular goods by those deemed members, is to be recognized and distinguished from irrelevant criteria. The focus appears to have shifted from defining the nature and purpose of goods and the consequently appropriate basis for distribution (i.e. distributive paradigms), to defining and recognizing the characteristics of individuals, given that these can be criteria for access (recognition paradigms). It is not just that goods need to be distributed according to relevant reasons, but that an enlargement of the parameters of what constitutes relevant reasons is required. Finally, once relevant reasons are presented, they of course need to be recognized.

It is possible to reconstruct the above in terms of a distributive process. There need to be decisions about membership of the distributive community, and criteria for membership need to be identified and assessed. The social meaning or purpose of a good needs to be defined, and criteria for access devised which further that purpose, or at least respect it. Potential recipients (from within the distributive community) present what they are, do and have (Walzer 1983) for assessment. Through describing redistribution as a process, the stages at which misrecognition can intervene become apparent – in definitions of 'membership', the purpose of the good, criteria for access and assessment. It is not a matter of prioritizing 'cultural' over material, or displacing one with another, but understanding the wider importance of recognition and how it is integrally connected to distributive justice. If true that distributive justice can only be achieved where cultural or other factors signifying difference are taken into account, does it also hold that recognition of the value of difference can only be achieved via distributive means? To the extent that respect and status are contingent on possession of socially valued goods this seems likely. It

may also reflect position in the distributive chain, i.e. who has the power to determine the nature of the good and the basis of access to it.

How does all this relate to questions of inclusion and exclusion? Perhaps it is possible to set it in the context of an ultimate, unifying objective broadly around maximizing the scope for inclusion while minimizing the necessity for conformity. In Rawlsian terms, the 'social ideal' or 'conception of society' is one which promotes the inclusion of diversity. To achieve this, both fair distribution and recognition are required. There also needs to be exploration of the purposes of goods to identify the different routes to meeting them. The notion of complex identities may provide scope for cross-cutting affinities as individuals identify with many groups, providing channels of interconnection between them, thereby promoting social cohesion. Walzer's theory of complex equalities may provide a theoretical basis for the equal valuing of diverse goods and characteristics. It may also be a means of diffusing dynamics towards increasing inequality.

It is unclear without further exploration whether such embryonic propositions could be developed into strategies for addressing the conflicts and tensions provoked by bringing cultural awareness to questions of distribution. These tensions are not necessarily those cited by Fraser. Although the structural or contextual barriers confronting people sharing a given characteristic still need to be addressed, the issue is not so much one of group differentiation versus dedifferentiation. Rather, it is a question of how best to distinguish relevant from irrelevant characteristics in a given setting, with regard to a particular purpose of a designated good. The extent of recognition depends on the quality of the indicators selected. The problems associated with achieving socially just distribution in a more mobile society with permeable borders remain unresolved. In a multi-cultural society, there may be competing – even mutually incompatible – understandings of goods, norms, expectations and values. Overall, this signals the need for a new, more sophisticated approach.

¹ Walzer does discuss the multiple meanings of bread and the contingency of meaning on setting, but as an argument against the notion of primary or basic goods rather than an illustration of the potential for elusiveness of social meaning.

Chapter 3: Poverty

Introduction

As with social justice, there have been various approaches to poverty. It is a confused terrain, with concepts, definitions, descriptions and measures not always consistently distinguished (Lister 2004). There are different reasons why researchers or politicians have an interest in poverty; to describe it, to explain it and/or prescribe action to tackle it (Flaherty *et al.* 2004). It should not, therefore, be surprising if different approaches have evolved to suit different purposes. To demonstrate the existence of poverty is implicitly to call for action to address it (Alcock 1993; Piachaud 1987 cited in Lister 2004). As a political concept it follows that it will be heavily contested (Alcock 1993). Social scientists will be concerned to find scientifically rigorous ways of defining adequacy. Campaigners can be expected to focus on the extent of poverty, the speed of increase, or slowness of decrease. While politicians are obliged to define minima in order to set benefit levels, to accept that poverty remains a massive social problem not only risks indicting their own policies, it can apply pressure for politically unacceptable levels of redistribution. They will therefore have incentives to understate (even negate) the problem and overstate progress in tackling it.

Poverty is academically contested in that many approaches co-exist, although outright clashes are rare (Townsend's disagreement with Sen's capabilities theory being a notable exception). Given the space available and in the interests of simplicity it is proposed to group them into three. The first encompasses all manner of deprivations, their causes and effects. Poverty is treated as synonymous with deprivation rather than an element of it. At its broadest, it subsumes all the themes encompassed by what others term social exclusion. Rather than poverty being a facet of social exclusion, social exclusion becomes a discourse of poverty (Lister 2004). In the second approach, poverty is narrowly equated with lack of income or material resources. Sen (1983) takes a distinct third approach, arguing that it is not material resources (or commodities) that determine living standards, but 'capabilities' – what a person is able to do.

The confusing mish-mash of concepts, definitions, descriptions, measures, and policies, and the extent to which any one is somehow taken as inherently indicative of others, presents obvious difficulties in disentangling theory about poverty and locating it on the theory spectrum. Causes, effects and descriptions of deprivation are closely entwined. Understandings of poverty are usually sited within a particular societal context, rather than anything more abstract and 'ideal'. It could be argued that the development of standardized deprivation indicators and components of standardized life-styles represent attempts at defining 'ideal' models. It might be argued (though many would disagree) that lacking the resources needed for physical survival transcends any specific societal context. Generally we are moving towards the operational end of the theory spectrum, if not by-passing theory altogether in circular debates from measurement to calls for action, to challenges to the basis of measurement as justification for inaction, to new measurement, etc. A notable exception is Sen's capability theory. It is far from clear how a focus on capabilities can be converted into feasible policy and practice, suggesting that Sen's work is placed towards the abstract end of the spectrum. Sen merely suggests that operationalising capability theory might take the form of "...some kind of efficiency-adjusted level of income with "income" units reflecting command over capabilities rather than commodities.", and (not altogether helpfully), that this would be "...a rewarding field of research" (1983, p165).

This chapter takes as a working definition of poverty "...an inability to participate in society, involving both a low income and a low standard of living" (Lister 2004, p15). It begins by considering the little that is to be found by way of theoretical frameworks and typologies of discourses. It proceeds to 'unpack' recurrent themes and factors. This provides a backdrop against which to review definitions of poverty as deprivation, and measurements of the adequacy of income and material resources. Sen's 'capability' theory is examined separately to show how through his reframing of the debate it becomes possible to resolve some, if not all, of the difficulties inherent to more traditional approaches to poverty. The final part considers the key issues to emerge from this chapter, and signposts for theoretical development.

Theoretical frameworks and typologies

Within the poverty literature, examples are to be found of nascent theoretical frameworks and typologies – not that those responsible would necessarily describe them as anything so grand.

Spicker (1999) groups meanings of poverty, all connected to the idea of unacceptable hardship, around bad material conditions (multiple deprivations, unmet needs, low levels of living), economic position (inequalities, class position, power over resources) and social position (lack of entitlements, lack of security, exclusions, dependencies). Although it can persuasively be argued that each has a distinct meaning, each could exist alone or combinations could exist at the same time (as Spicker acknowledges). The connections between bad material conditions, economic position and social position, may benefit from further exploration, if this were to form the basis of a coherent framework.

Taking a different tack, Veit-Wilson (1998) identified from cross-national research seven different discourses of poverty, grouping them under what he terms 'humanistic' and 'asocial' headings. Under the former are discourses around structural considerations, social exclusion, 'behaviouristic' (underclass-type) concerns and what he describes as the 'egalitarian average' - a discourse with Nordic origins, where poverty is denied or seen as peripheral and the issue is divergence from the living levels of average citizens - to be addressed by enhancing personal access to conventional resources and experiences. Under 'asocial', he argues, are to be found statistical measures of inequality, economic discourse which sees poverty as failure to make the right choices, 'irrational' behaviour and lack of sufficiently profitable productive capacity, and legalistic labelling of the poor as those officially in receipt of social assistance benefits. Without engaging in a detailed critique of how discourses are grouped (as is unnecessary for the purpose of this thesis), between them, they signal that causes may be structural (i.e. to do with the way in which society is structured), or attributable to the behaviour, choices or skills deficits of individuals, and that poverty is linked to (the same as?) inequality or social exclusion. Although each theme is important, each has very different implications for policy direction - e.g. whether towards changing behaviour or structures. Once again, it is unclear how discourses relate to each other, and how and if they can be integrated in a theoretically coherent way.

While social scientists focus on finding objective measurements of income and consumption as the core to poverty, people with experience of poverty tend to give primacy to relational matters such as loss of autonomy, disrespect and shame (Lister 2004). To show how these are compatible, there have been attempts to 'shape' poverty, such as Lister's portrayal of it as a 'material and non-material wheel of poverty' (Lister 2004). At its hub lies 'unacceptable hardship' (as per Spicker 1999) as the material core of poverty. Its outer rim represents "...the

relational/ symbolic aspects of poverty experienced by those living in unacceptable material hardship” (2004, p8). These include disrespect, humiliation, shame and stigma, ‘othering’, lack of voice and powerlessness. To incorporate relational/ symbolic issues into poverty debates is an important and useful development. However, while interconnections between hub and rim seem entirely plausible, the relational/ symbolic features listed might be caused by factors other than material hardship (see below). To strengthen this as a theoretical framework this would need to be accounted for, relationships between the hub and each aspect at the rim would need to be theorised, as would the distinctiveness and interconnections between aspects.

Cross-cutting themes

Absolute and relative poverty

Controversy has particularly centred on whether poverty only exists when it is ‘absolute’, where material resources are insufficient for physical survival, or whether it is a matter of ‘relative deprivation’, relative to the society in question and sufficient to enable participation. Absolute poverty has been defined as “...characterised by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information. It depends not only on income but also on access to services” (UN World Summit, Copenhagen 1995, United Nations 2000). An (alleged) contrast is provided by Townsend’s much-cited definition of ‘relative’ poverty:

“Individuals, families, and groups in the population can be said to be in poverty when they lack the resources to obtain the types of diet, participate in the activities and have the living conditions and amenities which are customary, or at least widely encouraged or approved, in societies to which they belong. Their resources are so seriously below those commanded by the average individual or family that they are, in effect, excluded from ordinary living patterns, customs and activities” (Townsend 1979, p31).

Confusion around absolute and relative poverty has opened the door to the claim that poverty does not exist in Britain (see speech by Rt Hon John Moore 1989). By this is meant that poverty is not of the order seen in famine regions of Africa. In Britain, according to such politicians, all is in place for physical survival; a debatable claim, given statistics on morbidity and mortality rates and their relationship to income. In a wealthy society like Britain, the argument runs,

relative poverty could mean only having one car when the majority has two. While seeming incontrovertible that not having two cars cannot be taken as indicative of poverty, for a large two-earner, but low-earning, family living in a rural area with poor public transport infrastructure, it could have a significant negative impact on living standards. The underlying argument, though, is valid: that inequality may exist without anyone necessarily experiencing 'unacceptable hardship'.

It appears that a number of concepts have become erroneously conflated, not least distinctions between relative poverty and inequality. Furthermore, 'absolute' and 'relative' have come to signify more than one concept apiece. Firstly each is often taken to say something about degree of deprivation, where 'absolute' poverty refers to a severe degree and 'relative' poverty is less severe. Secondly, 'absolute' can mean independent of a particular societal context, while 'relative' poverty is relative to it. Thirdly, 'absolute' can refer to physical needs and 'relative' to social needs. Fourthly, needs both physical and social can be viewed as 'absolute' (to be without hunger, appear in public without shame, etc), while the means of meeting them are 'relative' to the society where they occur (Sen 1983 – see below).

The first issue to tackle is the distinction between physical and social needs. It could be argued that as human beings are biologically much the same wherever they happen to be located, their basic needs will be universal. Unlike human biology, societal cultures and structures vary considerably by time and place, hence needs originating from those sources will be 'relative' to those factors. Yet Sen would argue that both physical and social needs are 'absolute', and evidence from 'poor people' suggests that failure to meet social needs, to conduct satisfactory social relationships, is key to the experience of poverty. Needs for autonomy, respect, voice are as universal as needs to satiate hunger, have access to shelter, etc. However, it should not blithely be assumed that even universal needs will always be identical. For example, older people and disabled people may have additional needs for special diets or extra heating which are physical in origin.

The question then concerns whether ways to meet both physical and social needs are socially constructed. It seems indisputable that they are. Hunger may be satiated by stale bread or a three course meal, by a curry and rice or meat and vegetables. Expectations and meanings are contingent on socio-cultural norms. Moreover, there is no obvious reason why extreme

deprivation may not be understood relative to social context, or why a supposedly lesser degree of deprivation should not have very severe consequences because of social context.

Variations

That necessities cannot be established in isolation from societal context has long been acknowledged by commentators as far back as Alfred Marshall (1890), and arguably implied by Adam Smith (1776). More recently, Veit-Wilson has contended that a minimum income level: "... has to be argued and justified in its social context. There cannot be a free-floating and universally acceptable criterion of 'adequacy'..." (Veit- Wilson 1998, p21). Alongside historical and geographical variations, the possibility that cultural variations can co-exist at the same time and place has started to receive more attention. Without wishing to overstate difference, different socio-cultural contexts do co-exist and these may well have differing socially approved 'ordinary living patterns, customs and activities, norms, values and expectations'. As Young states:

"...in part because they have been segregated from one another, and in part because they have particular histories and traditions, there are cultural differences among social groups – differences in language, style of living, body comportment and gestures, values, and perspectives on society" (1990, p164).

Whether or not the differences cited are cultural in origin (see chapter 2), without unduly stretching meanings similar factors *may* distinguish disabled people, women, gay and lesbian people, older people, children and so on.

Nonetheless, it is striking that in multicultural Western societies approaches to defining and measuring poverty are commonly rooted in assumptions that consensus can be achieved about life-styles, 'customary activities' and what constitute essential goods and services. This goes back to Townsend's definition of poverty (1979), but more recent examples confirm that this approach not only continues but retains international credibility. The European Commission definition adopted in 1984 equates 'the poor' with: "...persons, families and groups of persons whose resources (material, cultural and social) are so limited as to exclude them from the minimum acceptable way of life in the Member State in which they live.", clearly implying the existence of one consensually agreed minimum in each Member State. Similarly, according to a World Bank economist, "'Poverty' can be said to exist in a given society when one or more persons do not attain a level of material well-being deemed to constitute a reasonable minimum

by the standards of that society” (Ravallion 1992, p4). Surprisingly, given its source, this seems to presuppose that the society is relatively closed. Whatever the weaknesses of the ‘globalisation’ thesis, there is no obvious reason why one set of standards should apply, when technological developments mean that external comparisons can easily be drawn. Neither is it necessarily the case that an individual has membership of just one society or community. Each may have a choice of peer groups and what each approves of or expects may differ.

It is not just that people hold different culturally-derived views about essential goods and activities. Objectively it is a fact that some people incur extra costs to achieve the same standard of living. The same amount of income brings disparity of outcomes, subject to personal and environmental factors (Barry 2002). An item which is inessential to one person is a necessity for another. For example, not having a washing machine may have a disproportionately adverse effect on the living standards of households including lots of children or someone with incontinence; a car may be a necessity for someone living in a remote rural area, but inessential for someone living in an urban environment with good public transport.

Variations in cultures, expectations and circumstances can vary geographically, as well as demographically, within one and the same nation state. Variations may be associated with a particular institution or peer group. Where there is devolution of funding and distributive powers, there may also be differences in cash needs because in some areas essential goods and services are funded through taxation and are free (or subsidised) at the point of use. For example, some local authorities will have subsidised transport schemes for elderly or disabled people, while others do not. Charging arrangements for community care services may also differ.

Underlying factors

Approaches to poverty have traditionally been premised upon the notion that deprivation and inability to participate are attributed to lack of income and material resources and that these translate straightforwardly into living standards. While such outcomes may indeed be caused by inadequate income and material resources, if research findings are to be robust, it is important to identify whether other factors could equally be responsible.

It is possible that deprivations can not be overcome, and lack of participation cannot be addressed, by any amount of personal income or type of material resources, and that they were caused by other factors. For example, hunger may be caused by macro-level failure to produce or distribute food; malnutrition by lack of awareness about what constitutes a balanced diet. Lack of access to services may be due to lack of availability of services, lack of transport to reach them or the nature of access criteria. The role of personal income/ material resources in addressing unsafe environments is far from clear; these may instead be attributable to inadequate policing, pollution, domestic violence and so on.

Veit-Wilson recognises that poverty as "...an enforced lack of socially perceived necessities..." (Mack & Lansley 1985, p39) might not just result from lack of money but discriminatory social barriers to earning money "...based on such factors as ability, age, education, ethnicity, gender or race" (1998, p15). This might partly explain why certain groups are statistically shown to be disproportionately poor. Discrimination can mean that even if a person is materially well-off, they are barred from participation due to who they are, e.g. black, old, disabled or gay. Addressing directly forms of deprivation other than income, such as lack of education, ill-health or poor housing, may still not be enough to achieve participation. While personal income may provide an individual with more options, e.g. barriers presented by inaccessible public transport may be circumvented by using a privately owned car, personal security may be enhanced by employing a bodyguard, etc, it cannot always do so. No amount of personal income will enable a wheel-chair user to enter an inaccessible building, or a person to understand a job advertisement written in a language which is foreign to them, or in an inappropriate format.

Conversely, it may be that a person is able to participate despite deficiencies in such areas as education, housing or health. For example, depending on the setting or the purpose of participation, a lack of education may be relevant or completely irrelevant. However, even if different attributes are necessary for access to different goods, services and activities (see chapter 2), it stands to reason that the greater the number and type of deficiencies, the more likely it becomes that participation will be curtailed.

Objective and subjective accounts

The different perspectives of academics studying poverty and those experiencing it have increasingly come to the fore. Academics and campaigning organisations comprised of people without personal experience of poverty have sometimes been accused of compounding the disempowerment of poor people; of being part of the problem rather than the solution (e.g. see Beresford *et al.* 1999). The right of 'poor people' to speak for themselves, and the importance of hearing their voices, is increasingly gaining acceptance (Lister 2004). The case seems partly based on matters of principle and partly the acknowledgement that lived experience of a situation engenders expertise about it which has much to contribute to developing understanding and strategies for action. In contrast to the usual academic focus on income and material resources, participatory approaches tend to highlight the non-material aspects of poverty, like lack of voice, humiliation, and stigma (Lister 2004). It is noticeable that even where the practical constraints of very low incomes are discussed by 'poor people', it is the associated emotional toll that comes through; anxiety at being unable to meet supermarket bills, anger that elderly people sit in the dark because they cannot afford electricity bills, and 'being unable to cope' if shoes got holes in them (Beresford *et al.* 1999). The cultural stigma of poverty is clearly absorbed by people on very low incomes who themselves commonly reject the label of 'poor people', denying that they live in poverty and tending to set benchmarks for necessities very low (Alcock 1993).

Although the powerlessness experienced by poor people must clearly extend well beyond their lack of voice in poverty debates, it is on this that academics interested in poverty and participatory research have often focused. If empowerment is to be more than "...a chameleon 'feel-good' term that means different things to different people in different contexts..." (Lister 2004, p173) it suggests that study would be worthwhile of how power operates more generally in social relationships, and whether power shifts can be achieved within them. If relational/symbolic aspects are of primary importance, there is a need to develop a better understanding of how social relationships are structured and enacted. It follows that relationships with welfare institutions whose role is to address poverty and disadvantage are likely to be of critical importance. Yet, according to the 'poor people' participating in Beresford *et al.*'s research (1999) the experience is 'degrading' and 'you're treated like a criminal'. DSS staff treat clients

'like dirt', behaving 'like they own you'; 'as soon as you are on income support everybody officially knows your business'.

Poverty as deprivation

Decisions need to be made as to whether poverty is to be distinguished from other factors associated with deprivation, or whether it is to be an umbrella term subsuming all others. Simply to declare that poverty equals deprivation is unhelpful: "...the broader the approach taken to describing what poverty is, the harder it is to define it precisely" (Flaherty *et al.* 2004, p17). For example, the Programme of Action agreed by the United Nations World Summit for Social Development meeting in Copenhagen in 1995 defined the manifestations of poverty in its broadest sense as:

"...lack of income and productive resources to ensure sustainable livelihoods; hunger and malnutrition; ill-health; limited or lack of access to education and other basic services; increased morbidity and mortality from illness; homelessness and inadequate housing; unsafe environments and social discrimination and exclusion. It is also characterised by lack of participation in decision-making and in civil, social and cultural life" (United Nations 2000).

It is impossible to say of which, if any, discourse this forms a part. This is because it is not so much a definition of poverty as an apparently random list of disadvantages, causes and effects. It would, no doubt, be possible to categorise them under 'meanings' as per Spicker's groupings: some appear to be manifestations of bad material conditions, others of economic or social position. Interestingly, 'lack of participation in decision-making' suggests a new 'meaning' concerning political position (again, it might be informative to explore interconnections with the other three). The document has little specific to say on the causes of poverty, beyond acknowledging that these are many (paragraph 23) and that no uniform remedy is to be found for global application. Nonetheless it proposes very wide-ranging action. The emphasis is on description and action, rather than causal theory.

Study of the manifestations of poverty can be combined with particular ways of defining it. For example, some have looked at statistical evidence, e.g. Households Below Average Income statistics, or numbers on income support ('asocial discourses'), and its relationship to such matters as health, housing tenure and educational qualifications, tracking changes over time, or

exploring differentials between groups, as defined by ethnicity, age, household composition, geographical location and so on (e.g. Howarth *et al.*, 1999 and others in that annual series). Such research can play a key role in problem definition and in making a case for political action. It may point to the need to redistribute resources, or to targeted policy action for people with certain characteristics. However, the extent to which findings are heeded depends on the credibility of the poverty definitions used. If different methods lead to different definitions of the problem, or leave wide open to interpretation the nature of underlying causes (e.g. whether structural or behavioural), any clear steer for policy direction evaporates along with pressure for political action.

Poverty as inadequate income and material resources

Whatever the limitations, it is perhaps not surprising that approaches to defining poverty have increasingly focused narrowly on income as an indirect measurement of living standards and consumption (Ringen 1988, cited in Berghman 1995). It is not just that income is a 'dominant' or 'primary' good as the route to many others (Walzer 1983, Rawls 1972), but also that money provides a precise, measurable and consistent basis for establishing value and making comparisons. Given that income can be redistributed, whereas other forms of goods cannot, there are practical reasons for focusing attention on it. In a 'marketised' society lack of income can reasonably be expected to play a major role as a determinant of deprivation. If income is straightforwardly interchangeable with material goods, services and activities and these are straightforwardly translatable into living standards, distributive justice critically depends on the distribution of income, and access to the means of acquiring it.

According to Veit-Wilson (1998), approaches to defining income adequacy have taken scientific and unscientific, politically expedient forms. Veit-Wilson has branded the latter 'Government Minimum Income Standards' (MIS), describing them as:

“...a political criterion of the adequacy of income levels for some given minimum real level of living, for a given period of time, of some section or all of the population, embodied in or symbolised by a formal administrative instrument or other construct” (1998, p1).

Governments require definitions which are politically acceptable, communicable and administratively feasible. If they are to set benefit levels at a level sufficient to address poverty, definitions also need to be precise (Flaherty *et al.* 2004). Clearly, if the electorate is resistant to tax rises, and this is necessary for redistribution, politicians have a vested interest in keeping benefit levels low and reducing both the legal and moral basis for entitlements, perhaps by inflating the ranks of the 'undeserving poor'.

Rather than identify 'a political criterion of the adequacy of income levels' to set benefit levels, the UK government has in the past used income support levels (previously supplementary benefit and, before that, national assistance) as the criterion of income adequacy. Thus, those in receipt of income support, or whose income was equal to or below income support levels, were said to be in poverty (a variation proposed by Townsend was a poverty line of 40 per cent above plus rent). Low Income Families statistics (the relevant dataset) were used by governments until the mid 1980s. However, benefits levels are not set by the outcome of scientific study of what is needed to achieve a minimally acceptable standard of living. They "...lack any demonstrable justification as adequate" (Veit-Wilson 1998, p22). Instead of income adequacy being defined by benefit levels, benefit levels should be set to reflect income adequacy. A further criticism of this approach, often emanating from politicians themselves, has been that if benefit levels rise, perversely so too do the numbers in poverty. As Sen (1983) points out, it implies that the most effective way to reduce poverty is to cut benefit levels.

Other 'unscientific' measures concern the comparison of income or expenditure of proportions of the population and/ or differently constituted households against equivalised averages (e.g. the Households Below Average Incomes series and Family Expenditure Survey, respectively). A widely used measurement in research and for cross-Europe comparisons is 60 per cent of the median equivalised income after housing costs (AHC) (Flaherty *et al.* 2004). Anyone living in a household with an income below this is said to be in poverty. Housing costs are discounted as they can constitute too significant a variable and, as such, mask the underlying picture. However, the Labour government has recently, and controversially, chosen to rely on 'before housing costs' (BHC) figure with the consequence that the reduction required to meet child poverty targets is significantly less. Confusingly, from 2004/05, there will be three measures on which to gauge progress: 'absolute poverty', defined as BHC equivalised income of less than 60 per cent of the 1998/99 median, uprated by inflation; 'relative' low income, taken as BHC equivalised

income of less than 60 per cent of the contemporary median; and material deprivation and low income combined, which means BHC equivalised income of less than 70 per cent of the contemporary median and lacking necessities which cannot be afforded (DWP 2003). While using different measures could be argued to increase credibility and precision, the chances of outcomes being understood by the electorate are probably slim. Viewed cynically, this might be taken as a new approach to squaring the circle of precision and political acceptability.

A difficulty with statistical approaches to measuring incomes which define poverty as a percentile of the average is that "...gains shared by all tend to get discounted.", or that "...a general decline in prosperity...need not show up as a sharp increase in poverty since the relative picture need not change" (Sen 1983, p156). Furthermore, as with income support levels, no research has been undertaken to identify what percentage of median income is actually needed to avoid deprivation. Clearly, comparisons with the average will be affected by the shape of the spread of income (or expenditure) across the population. Depending on the spread, 60 per cent of the average income (or expenditure) could enable a very comfortable standard of living. Alternatively, the average – let alone half of it – might be quite inadequate.

Assertions that those below a certain percentile in the income distribution are 'in poverty', or that the level of social assistance benefits represents a poverty line "...have no status as poverty measures; they reflect nothing more than power holders' or theoreticians' subjective opinion..." (Veit-Wilson 1998, p12). The question is whether 'scientific' methods are any less subjective, even if they do aim to relate income levels to, often itemised, standards of living. Here, though, the subjective judgement concerns what is to be deemed necessary and/ or customary. Scientific approaches to poverty measurement assume that hypotheses about socially defined standards and necessary resources can be reliably tested or refuted (Veit-Wilson 1998). If standards can be ascertained, it is supposed, then so too can the hypothetical boundary between sufficient and insufficient resources necessary to achieve them.

The deprivation indicator approach (e.g. Mack and Lansley 1985; Townsend and Gordon 1993) aims to determine minimum standards by examining what people on average take to be the necessities of decent social life, covering both material objects and intangible experiences (Veit Wilson 1998). It involves surveying the population to discover the majority view about social necessities. The survey then explores what proportion of the population has these necessities at

each income level, and whether not having them is chosen. It is then a matter of identifying any statistical correlation between (involuntary) lack of necessities and income levels, in order to see if there is a threshold boundary of income which correlates with increasing deprivation. Outcomes may well take the form of bands of income where there are correlations with deprivation, and degrees of probability about such correlations (Townsend and Gordon 1993). Already we are moving away from the precision required for setting benefit levels. Furthermore, relying on what people on average take to be necessities may mask distinct cultural and other variations.

The 'attitudinal approach' (Veit-Wilson 1998) involves surveying the population to discover actual income levels and people's attitudes about the minimum they would need to make ends meet. These are then compared, and where found to be the same (i.e. actual income and views on minimum income), is where the 'poverty line' is deemed to be. According to Veit-Wilson, attitudinal measures risk becoming rapidly outdated as patterns of income and expenditure change. This approach too might mask significant variations. However, it has the distinct advantage of not prescribing lifestyle. By the same token, though, it could be accused of being 'unscientific'. It may be a more democratic way to reach conclusions, but it is still based on subjective opinions about minima.

In contrast to the 'attitudes approach', budget standards itemise goods and activities in great detail, showing "...the income levels at which a range of conventional life-styles could in theory be achieved..." (Veit-Wilson 1998, p19). Basically, this involves compiling and costing baskets of goods and activities necessary to achieve designated standards of living. It has much in common with the 'deprivation indicator' approach described above. In Britain, the use of budget standards can be traced back to Rowntree's survey of the population of York (1901). This was restricted to core costs, such as food, clothing and shelter, with a 'margin' for unspecified other needs. Rather more recently, the Family Budget Unit (York University) has extended this approach, itemising in detail all the components of a 'typical' family budget, right down to hair slides and balls of string (Parker 1998). Budgets can be devised for different standards of living, e.g. a 'modest but adequate' budget (Bradshaw 1993) and a 'low cost but acceptable' budget (Parker 1998). The latter presented budgets for two family types, with variations (working hours, effects on travel-to-work and childcare costs) and implications for costs spelt out, and the pricing centre (York) held constant. Budgets are usually devised by academic experts, and perhaps

tested out with focus groups comprised of people from the types of households concerned. Occasionally they are developed by members of a particular group (e.g. see Middleton *et al.* 1994).

Results of such studies can be compared to income support levels, or used to describe poverty in terms of doing without necessary consumer durables, activities, etc. Household composition and location are narrowly determined, while the content of budgets, the consumer durables and activities judged necessary are often extraordinarily detailed, raising questions about transferability. Scope for variation is accommodated to some extent by distinguishing budget standards that "...are assumed to be the same for all households of a particular family type" (Parker 1998, p 12) from expenditures expected to be variable. The former includes such items as food, clothing and personal care; the latter, housing, fuel and transport. However, the methodology lends itself to glib challenges about (for example) how many socks of what quality a family requires. It can be accused of setting poverty lines whereby people who do not possess the designated items (socks, television, etc) are living in poverty. Once again, the scope for culturally-derived differences of view about even essential items and activities and the differing resources needed to achieve the same standard of living for some groups cannot easily be accommodated. Nonetheless, with some adaptation, this methodology might lend itself to the study of similarities and differences between the expectations, needs and life-styles of people with different characteristics in different household types.

Each method of measuring the adequacy of income and/ or material resources has its own strengths and weaknesses (although any strengths to using income support levels as an arbitrary poverty line are hard to discern). Even where a method avoids one set of problems, it will be unable to address others. However, while any one measurement on its own only gives part of the picture, taken together it is possible to piece together a perspective on the whole. Attempts have been made to combine approaches, e.g. Gordon *et al.* 2000, which draws both on the views about necessities and income levels of a 'representative sample' of the population as well as scientific methods.

Such increasingly sophisticated approaches are probably the nearest it is possible to come to robust conclusions. Even so, they inevitably must rely on averages. Greater examination of the extent to which views on necessities are shared and expenditures the same for all family types

would help to allay fears that conclusions are unreliable because too many variables apply (e.g. the nature of the socio-cultural environment, and the diversity of inhabitants' needs, aspirations and life-styles). It might indeed be the case, with regard to budget standards, that: "Although different families make different purchases, experience in other countries shows that the total amounts spent are similar" (Parker 1998). Yet, experiences from one society, with a different set of structural, demographic and cultural variables, may not be transferable to others.

The more precise the measure, the more it relies on conformity to the average. To define a poverty line by pounds and pence makes scientific sense if the society in question is comprised of identical households, with identical life-styles and where uniform social conditions prevail throughout. The greater the diversity, the more it becomes necessary to rely on bands and probabilities, expanding and diminishing proportionate to diversity. To seek to prescribe an approved life-style, essential goods and activities, in the absence of an understanding of both sameness and difference, risks cultural imperialism and oppression. It risks falling into the trap identified by those concerned with social justice as cultural misrecognition.

No matter what the consensus on minimum living standards, nor how good the measurement of the adequacy of income and material resources, as discussed, it remains the case that other factors can intervene to prevent or promote the achievement of a minimum living standard and/or participation. Whatever the strengths and weaknesses of each methodology aiming to assess the adequacy of income and material resources, possession of any amount of income and material resources cannot guarantee participation or be straightforwardly equated with a certain standard of living. This raises the question of whether another approach can be found to defining adequacy and living standards, which is conceptually more coherent and operationally feasible.

'Capabilities'

Sen (1983) articulates an alternative theoretical approach which promises to resolve familiar dilemmas – how to define living standards, understandings of absolute and relative poverty and what is required for participation. In effect, he deconstructs a process comprised of discrete components or 'spaces': commodities; characteristics; capabilities; functions and utility. Taking a bicycle as an example: "There is, as it were, a *sequence* from a commodity (in this case a bike), to characteristics (in this case, transportation), to capability to function (in this case, the ability to

move), to utility (in this case, pleasure from moving)” (1983, p160 – his emphasis). The person’s capability of moving in a certain way is attributable to the transportation characteristic of the bike. ‘Capability’ refers to what a person can, or has the option, to do or be; ‘function’ to what s/he actually manages to do or be.

Sen argues that ownership of commodities (or income or resources) is the wrong focus for determining living standards, because owning them does not necessarily mean that a person is able to make use of them. Utility, mental reaction to usage or consumption, is unreliable in that it may be consequent on an individual’s temperament. Instead, the focus for defining living standards should be on capabilities. For Sen, poverty is unfulfilled capabilities, i.e. poverty is ‘poor living’, the “...lack of capability to live a minimally decent life...” (2000, p4)

Having identified components, Sen proceeds to consider where ‘absolute’ and where ‘relative’ notions apply, arguing that the former applies to capabilities whereas the latter applies to commodities. Thus, the ‘absolute’ need of being able to participate in communal activities, requires differing amounts and/ or types of commodities, relative to what those activities in the given society are and the personal circumstances of those concerned. This distinction resides in the nature of the need. A person has an ‘absolute’ need not to be malnourished, not to be ashamed, to participate in communal activities, to have mobility, to be educated, etc. S/he may be hungry irrespective of whether any one else is, and so on. However, what in turn is needed to satiate ‘absolute’ needs will vary, i.e. will be ‘relative’ both to the norms of the particular society and the circumstances of the individual (whether disabled, old, etc). With regard to inclusion, as the focus of this thesis, what this means is that the capability of participation (or absolute need to participate) in communal activities is common to all societies, but what these activities are and what resources it takes to participate in them can vary hugely, both inter and intra societies.

The distinction between capability and utility is not always clear-cut. Commodities have symbolic as well as practical value: any old bike may get you efficiently from a to b, but a newer, more expensive one might also act as a status symbol, conveying something positive about the identity of the owner. Clothes of all sorts keep you warm and respectable, but the fashion industry is predicated on the rapidly changing symbolic value of clothing and what it indicates about identity and peer group. Both the practical and the symbolic characteristics of commodities are important for enabling participation or being accepted into ‘membership’. For a

capability to be realised, it is not just a matter of having the practical means to achieve it. It is insufficient to have the capability to appear in public, it must be possible to do so without shame (Sen 1983, citing Adam Smith 1776). It could be argued that any one capability incorporates aspects of utility. Alternatively, factors such as autonomy and self esteem could themselves be described as capabilities. It could then be argued that, to enact one capability (participation) should not compromise others (autonomy, self-esteem). Whichever way it is conceptualised, the key point for the purposes of this thesis is that inclusion is contingent on symbolic and physiological as well as material factors.

Conclusion

Poverty debates are marked by what might be considered a series of somewhat fruitless preoccupations. The strong emphasis on developing methodologies for defining poverty based on the erroneous premise that possession of income and material goods translates straightforwardly into living standards has long been a key feature. In view of the extent of socio-cultural and demographic diversity, there appears extreme difficulty (even futility) to seeking detailed agreement on necessities, or an accurate cross-national poverty line in the form of an income threshold. There are cross-purpose, and hence inconclusive, disagreements about whether poverty is 'absolute' or 'relative'. The politicised nature of poverty definitions can engender a dead-end dynamic between those intent on underlining the existence of poverty and those with incentives to do the opposite. Despite the development of numerous methods for measuring living standards and income adequacy, there are inherent difficulties to each, which means whatever the findings are the methodology is always vulnerable to attack. However, there are useful lessons to be learnt from the more traditional approaches to poverty, not least that a range of policy areas is relevant, in view of the many expressions of disadvantage. Greater attention to the extent of diversity, divergence from average views on necessities, required income levels and expenditures, might be of assistance. It may transpire that overall amounts are much the same for household types throughout the country, even if baskets of goods vary dramatically.

Due to the highly politicised nature of the debate, it becomes even more important to have coherent theory around causes, to reduce the scope for multiple alternative, politically convenient, interpretations. Yet, much of the poverty literature remains at a highly descriptive,

un-theorised level. Although better description *may* provide indications about cause and appropriate solution, it will rarely if ever provide incontrovertible proof of the accuracy of any one interpretation. This becomes a dialogue of the deaf.

The theoretical frameworks and typologies briefly discussed provide the glimmer of potential to organise and theorise interconnections between key themes to be found in the poverty literature. Yet each remains partially formed. All appear weak on theorising interconnections between their own component parts, and weaker still on tackling connections with alternative approaches. Nonetheless, Spicker's categorising of discourses in terms of economic or social position hints at the impact of material hardship in different societal dimensions. To this could be added 'political position', embracing discourses around disempowerment. Veit-Wilson draws attention to the distinctions between structural and behavioural discourses. Meanwhile Lister models the interface between material hardship and its social and physiological effects. Drawing attention to the physiological as well as the physical and social dimensions to poverty, the discrimination and disempowerment experienced by poor people promises to take poverty research, and anti-poverty policy, in a new and exciting direction. Sen's capability framework successfully clarifies and resolves some of the longstanding theoretical incoherence behind poverty definition methodologies. However it brings us no closer, and arguably further away, from a precise definition that can be operationalised by policy.

Poverty debates often share with social justice theory a concern for just distribution and redistribution. However, whereas social justice theorists are generally preoccupied with establishing a just basis for re/ distributions and the (arguably, interconnected) case for recognizing and valuing cultural differences, poverty debates tend to focus on the practicalities of identifying minimum living standards and the causes and consequences of failure to achieve them. In effect, they define socially just re/distribution, not in terms of the purposes of goods or the nature of distributive relationships, but as that which ensures no one lives below a minimum.

It could be argued that poverty researchers have been too ready to attribute all deprivations and exclusions to lack of income, and that they have stuck too rigidly to a distributive paradigm. Issues of cultural recognition begin to surface in attempts to standardise necessities and living standards. However, they come to the fore in discussion of the relational/ symbolic aspects of poverty (Lister 2004). It is as if poverty assumes the form of a personal characteristic, such as

gender, race or disability. Like these, it can convey symbolic misinformation about a person's incapacity or inferiority, in accordance with prevailing socio-cultural stereotypes. This might suggest another way to position distribution and recognition paradigms; not only can misrecognition contribute to distributive injustice, misrecognition can be a consequence *of* distributive injustice – although it does not necessarily follow. As repeatedly observed, material hardship (distributive injustice) and discrimination (misrecognition) can exist independently of each other. Either or both can prevent participation. If an overarching concept is to be found, inclusion would appear to fit the bill.

Discrimination can be positioned as a separate phenomenon experienced by people experiencing material poverty, or as an integral facet of material poverty. Due to the fact that discrimination can be experienced without poverty, and vice versa subject to socio-cultural context, it makes sense to keep them conceptually distinct while acknowledging the close interplay between them and the scope for either or both to provoke social exclusion. Thus the disproportionate deprivation and exclusion of certain groups (e.g. disabled people) might partially be attributable to material causes (extra costs associated with meeting physiological and social needs), and partially to discrimination (assumptions about incapacity restricting access to earned income; assumptions of inferiority on grounds of disability and/ or poverty).

If disempowerment is an important feature in the experience of poverty, perhaps a more fruitful approach than the pursuit of the holy grail of a consensually agreed poverty line would be to explore how people can be empowered to access goods, services and activities, and play a role in determining what and how these are provided. This suggests an emphasis on the process of distribution, on capacity building and the accountability of providers to recipients as much as vice versa. To some extent this signals the importance of democratic processes. However, if the aim is to get away from a 'one-size-fits-all' based on averages, or prescribed by the majority (in preference to an elite), something else is required. It clearly signals the need for creating choice for individual recipients, bringing with it the need for accessible information (if choices are to be informed and outcomes in accordance with expectations).

Sen's theory of capabilities could be said to focus on the sequence of requirements and actions and reactions, or the process of consumption from the perspective of the recipient, service user or customer. However, if our concern is with public policy, there are other perspectives and

processes to consider. For capability requirements to be addressed, the processes of distribution as well as consumption are relevant. Each stage of each process needs to be considered and, as Sen has shown, different issues may apply to each. If what is provided is to meet the capability requirements of each individual, bearing in mind variations in characteristics and the desirability of empowering those with the needs to define them, it suggests that recipients should be included at different stages of the distributive process, enabling them to influence the design of the product, access criteria and delivery methods. There needs to be transparency regarding how criteria are assessed and decisions made, and accountability and redress if mistakes are made. This is consistent with a goal of promoting inclusion – if inclusion is a process as much as an outcome. The challenge, then, is to explore how processes are structured and what can be done in practical terms to improve policy and delivery in order to maximise inclusion and capability.

This resonates with the conclusion of chapter 2; that distributive processes need to be explored. Extending Sen's linkage between capabilities and utilities, suggests that it is not just the practical ability to participate that is important. Symbolic and physiological issues also need to be taken into account.

Chapter 4: Discrimination

Introduction

Preceding chapters have drawn attention to two main themes. The first concerns questions of distribution; *what* is distributed and on what basis. Authors writing on poverty attempt to provide moral grounds for redistribution through defining minimum incomes and/ or living standards. The second focuses on *who* should get what and on what basis, and the consequent need for 'recognition'. It raises questions about the nature and perception of difference, the composition of groups and construction of identity. It is with such matters that discrimination literature is concerned.

The specific role of discrimination in creating disadvantage and exclusion requires clarification:

“...it is essential to distinguish discrimination from the larger phenomenon of disadvantage, as this can be seen in patterns of gender and racial inequality. These patterns are the products of a great variety of causes, of which discrimination is but one” (Banton 1994, p19)¹.

Disadvantage and exclusion may result from poverty and/ or discrimination (subject to definitions) – and perhaps additional factors found in social exclusion discourses (see chapter 5).

It is therefore necessary to define what discrimination is. While undisputed that women, black people, disabled people, lesbian and gay people (among others) may experience discrimination, this is not to argue their experiences of it are the same. Is discrimination a single phenomenon impacting differently on people with different characteristics, or are the inequalities experienced by people with different characteristics attributable to inherently different phenomena? In view of the multiple meanings of social justice and poverty, it is possible that 'discrimination' too can mean different things.

In keeping with the research aim, this chapter's purpose is to explore what theory on discrimination can contribute towards understanding exclusion and inclusion. It is a particularly challenging task. Unlike social justice and poverty, the definition of discrimination has not been

subjected to endless debate. It remains both unclear and uncontested. But, again unlike the subject of poverty, there is a vast theoretical literature emanating from many sources. There has been substantial theorizing around concepts of inequality (Williams 1969, Sen 2000, Walzer 1983, among others). Large bodies of literature describe and theorize inequality, discrimination and oppression as experienced by particular groups; focusing on gender, race, disability, sexual orientation and so on. Theoretical approaches taken within each group-based field (gender, race, disability, etc, respectively) *are* often fiercely contested. What is lacking is any serious attempt to develop a generic cross-group definition of discrimination. Indeed, the case for any such definition remains unclear; the sharing of theoretical approaches across groups appearing remarkably thin on the ground.

In exploring the nature of discrimination, it is helpful to draw on learning from a range of academic disciplines, professions and practitioners. Discrimination theory has its roots in psychology, sociology, economics and politics (Thompson 1998). Our main interest here is discrimination as it features in social theory, referring to other literatures as necessary. The influence of structuration theory and postmodernist thought are both discernible in what follows.

This chapter's starting point is to formulate working definitions of discrimination and oppression as generic phenomena and explore how they relate to poverty. It proceeds to review key themes in the group-based literatures, sketching out a range of theoretical approaches to understanding discrimination. As is to be expected, preoccupations of feminist authors writing on cultural recognition are found in writings on discrimination more widely. In view of the close connection between misrecognition and discrimination, certain issues first aired in chapter 2 in order to illuminate the meaning of cultural recognition will be expanded upon here. This does not set out to be a comprehensive literature review (worthy of a thesis in its own right) but to outline key themes in sufficient detail to enable consideration of how they might come together to shed light on how discrimination operates. This in turn should inform the development of a theoretical framework to maximise the inclusion of people with diverse characteristics.

Defining discrimination

The case for a generic approach

It is first necessary to establish that a generic approach is feasible and desirable. There may be good reasons why cross-fertilization between theoretical approaches remains so incomplete. It would be wrong, though, to suggest that all remain firmly encased in their respective academic silos. For example, in discussing disability, identity and difference, Shakespeare (1996) extracts lessons from feminist, lesbian and gay literature, and draws on the perspectives of disabled feminists and black feminists. Sometimes the relationship between two groups and associated theoretical approaches is very close, even if one develops in opposition to the other. For example, Wilchins describes queer theory as a "...hybrid of feminist and postmodernist thought..." (2004, p11). She also asserts that "It was second-class treatment from the gay and feminist movements that propelled many of us to start a separate transgender activism" (2004, p29), illustrating how new movements can be spawned by the limitations of others.

Within a given field of study there can be evidence of divergent discourses. Contrasting the approaches taken by parties in the disability field (disability and rehabilitation, medical sociology and disability theory), Williams observes that: "Parallel discourses have developed with scarcely any cross-fertilisation of ideas" (1996, p194). Far from coming together, the dynamic can be in the opposite direction:

"...an increasing division has emerged between 'disability theorists' and social scientists studying chronic illness, such as medical sociologists. The tendency has been to provide separate and competing, rather than joint, accounts of illness and disability" (Barnes and Mercer 1996, p2).

The fact that each group contains people with multiple characteristics has sometimes, but not always, been subject to theoretical analysis: "Class, race, sex, and gender are all categories that receive acknowledgement in the queer literature, but they are rarely fully analyzed" (Kirsch 2000, p11). The boundaries of a group may be expanded or, arguably, new groups created by defining identities and experiences based on more than one characteristic. It is possible to work outwards from one group to link with another, or inwards on segmentation within a group. For example, the contrasting experiences of the impact of sexism and racism within the disability population have been discussed by various authors (Begum, Hill and Stevens 1994; Killin 1993; Morris 1991; Stuart 1992).

A focus on diversity within groups has been particularly common amongst those working

primarily within a feminist paradigm. Young claims that it is widely recognised that “None of the social movements asserting positive group specificity is in fact a unity. All have group differences within them” (1990 p162). She adds that the development of sub-groups and cross-subgroups offers:

“... some beginning models for the development of a heterogeneous public. Each of the other social movements has also generated discussion of group differences that cut across their identities, leading to other possibilities of coalition and alliance” (1990, p163).

The importance of going beyond individual characteristic-specific understandings of discrimination and oppression is thus signalled from various quarters. Grosz, writing in the context of queer theory, articulates the case forcibly:

“For notions like oppression, discrimination or social positioning to have any meaning, they must be grasped outside any particular form (whether racist, imperialist, sexual, class, religious)...even though we recognise that oppressions have massive historical and cultural variations, something must be shared by all the different forms of oppression, if they are to be described by the same term. Both this core, or perhaps even ‘essence’, and the range and variability of the term need to be addressed if one is to come to a clear understanding of the relations and interactions between different forms of social domination, and their concrete differences and specificities. Our understanding of the term must be precise if it is to be used not only to cover a wide variety of different types of oppression, but also to articulate the interlockings and transformations effected by the congruences, convergences, points of reinforcement and/ or tensions among these different types” (1994, p134).

Some stress the need to join together on political rather than theoretical grounds:

“In the harsh and uncertain welfare world of the late twentieth century we need to go beyond the fragmentation of post-modern political radicalism and forge new alliances across bodies, experiences and socio-economic structures” (Williams 1996, p210).

This suggests that alliances need to be forged across different entities, with experiences a possible point of connection. As Young observes:

“...a relational understanding of group difference rejects exclusion...To say that there are differences among groups does not imply that there are not overlapping experiences, or that two groups have nothing in common...Different groups are always similar in some respects, and always potentially share some attributes, experiences and goals” (1990, p171; also Zappone 2003).

Comparisons between group-based theories may prompt fresh insights into the nature of discrimination and oppression experienced by particular groups. This might form a basis for a generic understanding of discrimination, providing a shared platform for challenging discrimination and a clear steer for action. It could enable deeper, more complete theoretical conceptualization of discrimination, oppression and their relationship to exclusion. An understanding at this level is needed to ensure that 'generic' discrimination does not simply reduce to a lowest common denominator all experiences of discrimination. It is important to acknowledge different experiences and the possibility of different causes to experiences which may, superficially, appear much the same. Policy solutions based on misunderstanding (or misrecognition) are unlikely to succeed, instead exacerbating disadvantage and exclusion.

Working definitions: discrimination and oppression

Despite some evidence of emerging consensus about the advantages to a generic approach, attempts to define and understand discrimination generically are rare. According to Thompson, author of one of few such texts, "...discrimination is simply a matter of identifying differences, and can be positive or negative" (1998, p9). In normative usage, though, its meaning is negative. This is reflected in Thompson's subsequent assertion that discrimination is:

"...the process (or set of processes) by which people are allocated to particular social categories with an unequal distribution of rights, resources, opportunities and power. It is a process through which certain groups and individuals are disadvantaged and oppressed" (1998, p78).

Banton takes a similar line, defining discrimination as "...the differential treatment of persons supposed to belong to a particular class of persons..." (1994, p1) - again a neutral stance in that differential treatment may have positive or negative consequences. However, Banton proceeds to stipulate that it is necessary to ascertain whether differential treatment is morally justifiable and/or lawful. This echoes a point made earlier by Williams: "...for every difference in the way men are treated, some general reason or principle of differentiation must be given" (1969, p154). It is not necessarily differential treatment that is problematic, but the basis for it.

Oppression is routinely associated with discrimination, although their inter-relationship remains ambiguous. As the outcome of (normative) discrimination, oppression is defined by Thompson

as:

“Inhuman or degrading treatment of individuals or groups; hardship and injustice brought about by the dominance of one group over another; the negative and demeaning exercise of power. Oppression often involved disregarding the rights of an individual or group and is thus a denial of citizenship” (2001, p34)

For Grosz: “The notion of oppression is clearly linked to power, to the relations, impulses and forms that power may take” (1994, p136). To summarise, at a generic level, she states that oppression can be minimally understood as a system of differential social positions, where the privilege of some is at the expense of those in subordinate positions, and that positions are directly linked to values, attributes, benefits and mobility. She also comments on the comparative ease with which dominant groups can prescribe systems of meaning, significance and representation which support their interests. On a slightly different tack Young attributes the cause of oppression to the “...norm of the homogenous public...” (1990, p179), which places ‘unassimilated’ persons or groups at a disadvantage in the competition for scarce resources, requiring them to transform their sense of identity in order to assimilate. This signals the importance of the basis for, or terms of, inclusion. Oppression would thus seem to denote the negative impact of power on those without it, in particular the limitation of the expression of identity or the development of potential, and/ or the reshaping of behaviours into an approved mould or norm. It denies or inhibits autonomy, awarding or affirming control over people’s lives.

The operation of discrimination and oppression

From these starting points, discrimination and oppression can be conceptualised as features of processes, commencing with the identification of individuals, matching characteristics against cultural norms (or criteria reflecting those norms), and assigning each accordingly to social categories. Differential treatment is then related to, and justified by, membership of a given social category. That treatment may be negative or positive; resources may be directed towards people who group members, or denied due to group membership. While oppression may be an outcome of a process, it might also apply at the point of access, in that to fit into a social category which attracts resources requires an individual to deny their difference, curtail self-expression or demonstrate a willingness to surrender power and autonomy.

For discrimination to have positive outcomes is just a matter of whether a group is singled out for favourable treatment. The onus is on accurate identification of group members, group definitions which accurately encompass the relevant characteristics of their members and differential treatment which effectively promotes a morally justifiable, legally permissible end. For example, if the goal of equality of outcome is deemed morally justifiable and action to achieve it can legally be taken, and if the starting point of a certain group is inferior to others, to target additional resources on that group would be appropriate. Clearly, misrecognition, and the subsequently mistaken assignment of an individual to a group, would not inevitably mean that s/he wrongly receives unfavourable treatment: the group may instead be singled out for favourable treatment. Taking the example of a goal of promoting equality of outcome, for someone wrongly to be awarded or wrongly deprived of additional resources would directly contravene that intention. Either way, accurate recognition remains paramount for the goal to be achieved.

However, identification may be accurate, but treatment nonetheless unjustifiably unfavourable, i.e. where (normative) discrimination is conscious. For example, the discriminator is fully aware that a candidate has possesses the qualities required for the job, but rejects their application because the candidate possesses another characteristic, irrelevant to the job, which has negative symbolic significance for the discriminator. Although the focus is on the accurate identification of difference, the accurate identification of sameness is also relevant. Difference may obscure sameness, with (normatively) discriminatory consequences. Misrecognition might also be said to occur through failure to identify relevant differences, while irrelevant samenesses are selected. This suggests that mis/identification is not necessarily an active, conscious process (Banton 1994). Either way this starts to suggest that a 'normative' definition of discrimination is closely connected to misrecognition, arising from some form of 'process error'.

The beginnings of a typology

Discrimination and oppression clearly have different impacts on people with different characteristics, hence distinctions between sexism, racism, disabilism, etc. Without particularising discrimination and oppression into group-based categories, it may still be the case that they can take different generic forms.

Bynoe *et al.* (1991) describe four types of discrimination: unfair 'direct' discrimination, unfair 'indirect' discrimination, 'unequal burdens' or failure reasonably to accommodate and discrimination on fair and reasonable grounds. Possible additions to a typology are to be found in eight processes (which could just as easily be outcomes) outlined by Thompson (1998): stereotyping, marginalisation, invisibilisation, infantilisation, welfarism, dehumanization and trivialisation. These all minimise significance as a means of avoiding engagement with difference. Conversely, particularly in the current climate, it could be argued that demonisation, the exaggeration of power or threat, is also associated with discrimination and oppression. Here the rationale is to promote an emphatic rejection, or legitimize the enforced assimilation, of those deemed dangerously different.

In the guise of something more positive, although nonetheless highly discriminatory, the 'personal tragedy' model (Swain and French 2000) portrays disabled people as tragic victims. They are also commonly portrayed as heroic survivors of personal tragedy. While pity and admiration are not always negative or inappropriate responses, in this context they can be taken to express 'better dead than disabled' (Swain and French 2000; see also Crow 1996). In all these cases, responses are distorted and disproportionate. Both under and over-statement create distance between 'the mainstream' and particular groups; distance caused by and exacerbating misunderstanding and misrecognition.

So far, it appears that discrimination (as misrecognition) and oppression (as distortion of identity) can be direct or indirect, deliberate or accidental, and have negative or 'positive' drivers. Discrimination in its less usual sense of accurate recognition is also possible; presumably it might lead to justifiable exclusion. Oppression too might be justifiable when it comes to preventing socially destructive behaviours.

Disentangling oppression, poverty and discrimination

Given this thesis' aim of developing a theoretical framework for the maximisation of the inclusion of diversity, it is important to understand how different forces and factors inter-relate, and whether different strategies are required to address them. Very generally, whereas poverty debates argue for the redistribution of material resources, analyses of inequality conducted to provide evidence of discrimination are concerned to achieve cultural recognition, an

acknowledgement of the value of people with certain characteristics and/ or a re-evaluation of cultural norms. It is conceivable that either has potential to be oppressive as defined above, consistent with Young's 'five faces of oppression' (1990), aiming to meld together factors connected to the political economy with those concerned with cultural recognition (see chapter 2). It is thus helpful to consider how oppression might arise from poverty (as material hardship) as well as from discrimination (as misrecognition).

As previously suggested, poor people can both experience material hardship and be discriminated against on grounds of poverty (chapter 2). Material hardship can also lead to oppression. A consequence of inadequate material resources may well be limitations in scope to express identity and develop potential, in that financial barriers may prevent taking up opportunities for either, potentially resulting in exclusion. For the same reason, behavioural options may be curtailed, as may be the capacity to act autonomously. This is not a consequence of direct enforcement. However, societal responses to poverty may be directly oppressive. For example, criteria for accessing benefits can require the demonstration of specified behaviours and limit autonomy of choice regarding the type of job a person must accept. Such 'oppression' may, or may not, be deemed justifiable. At worst it could stem from the view that poor people's behaviour is responsible for their predicament while overlooking the structural causes of poverty. Yet, people may behave in whatever way; they can still be poor.

Oppression can therefore be conceptualized as an outcome of inadequate material resources or distortions demanded by the powerful who determine the structuring and enactment of social (including distributive) processes. It is worth noting that people subjected to oppressive forces do not inevitably succumb to them, but find strategies, not just to preserve, but to assert their identities and preferred behaviours. It may also be the case that the oppression of aspects of identity, behaviours, etc, far from exacerbating exclusion is instead a requirement of inclusion. Not only discrimination can be direct or indirect, intended or consequential, positive or negative; it would seem that so too can oppression.

Lack of material resources and lack of cultural recognition can have the same outcome, although they are not necessarily one and the same. For example, Banton (1994) suggests that relative disadvantage might occur because some have fewer qualifications. This may be due to being unable to afford expensive schooling (i.e. material disadvantage), or attributable to how

education is structured, delivered and assessed, so as to disadvantage people with certain characteristics or from certain cultures (cultural misrecognition). There are other explanations which do not fall readily into either category. For example, some may simply have less academic aptitude. Explanations can also be more complex. For example, cultural expectations within a given group may prioritise the education of men rather than women. While this may be branded as discrimination against women (failure to recognise potential, etc), it could be argued that it would be oppressive to impose more egalitarian norms on groups that do not share them. This indicates that occasions arise where norms are mutually incompatible. It signals that a goal of maximising inclusion of people with diverse characteristics cannot mean dispensing with any terms of inclusion, or an avoidance of judgement and enforced change.²

Key themes

Underlying attitudes and motivations

If accurate recognition of individuals and their accurate assignment to appropriately defined groups is important to preventing unjustifiable disadvantage and exclusion, the underlying attitudes and motivations which steer judgments require consideration – whether or not they do so consciously and explicitly.

A recurrent theme in recent social theory (postmodernism, social constructionism and related developments), and a major preoccupation across the group-based literature, is the challenge to ‘essentialism’. This can be summarised as the view that the ‘essence’ of each individual, or individual characteristic around which groups are founded, is natural, unalterable and unique. Generally, this is taken to be rooted in genetic or biological make-up and is closely aligned to biological determinism.

Essentialism may be accompanied by reductionism: “...the process of reducing a complex, multifaceted reality to a simple, single-level explanation” (Thompson 1998, p145), in effect originating stereotypes. Again, often this will take the form of biological reductionism. One implication of reducing individuals to genetic or biological entities is to increase the power of experts working in such fields, in particular the medical profession.

There is no obvious reason why this could not apply to understandings of the social environment as much as the appreciation of individual identity. The notion that cultures are uniquely and inherently different – the root cause of essentialism - is suggested by Malik's assertion that "Cultures are sealed compartments which separate 'us' from 'them'. Cultures impose upon us (even from before birth) ways of being and modes of thinking from which we cannot escape" (1996, p164). This suggests that societies and cultures too are susceptible to reductionist stereotyping (not to mention essentialism).

Any of the above can be exacerbated by dogmatism - a refusal to engage with alternative views, a rejection of evidence and rational argument in favour of prejudice. It may stem from insecurity, lack of experience or an inability to engage with complexity. It may be a defensive response, or a requirement of faith-based or political creeds. Dogmatism effectively shuts down debate on the possibility of change, whether of individuals or their environment, denying the existence of room for manoeuvre.

Such attitudes both promote the likelihood of inappropriate in/action and constitute justifications for it. They are testaments to immobility, to fixity, affirming the inevitability of the status quo. Yet, it may prove possible to challenge apparent fixity by diffusing defensiveness or insecurity with educating and capacity-building, or finding ways to convey complexity accessibly. Even so, there are reasons why fixity may endure: "...it is simply not in the interests of the dominant groups, who have benefits without actually paying for them, readily to give up those benefits without a struggle" (Grosz, p135).

On another tack, Banton (1994) suggests that discrimination may be traced to taste, risk and profit. Moreover, Banton observes that discrimination is more likely when supply (e.g. of labour) is high relative to demand for it, or, put another way, the demand for jobs exceeds their availability. Presumably the same applies in other situations where resources cannot meet demand and formal rationing criteria do not achieve equilibrium. New rationing criteria may be introduced to restrict access. If these are consistent with the 'purpose of the good', they may result in disadvantage but are not necessarily discriminatory. If inconsistent with it, or adherence to defined criteria dissipates and allocation decisions become based on allocators' personal preferences, misrecognition - and hence discrimination - is implicated.

However, taste, risk and profit can extend beyond economic considerations. Risk is generally negotiated when engaging with the unfamiliar; taste or preference may be derived from what Giddens (1984) terms the desire for 'ontological security'. According to Wharton (2005), writing on the sociology of gender:

"...people are drawn to those whose attitudes, values, and beliefs are similar to their own. People who share our views affirm us...We may also feel that people who are like us in these ways are easier to communicate with...We may trust them more and feel a greater sense of kinship with them. Conversely, when people are different to us, we may feel threatened and find communication difficult" (2005, p59).

Yet, there is no obvious reason why difference could not be positively received as enriching, exciting and promoting creativity – hence 'profitable' in a wider sense than merely financial. Neither is it inevitable that difference is seen as immutable or significant, or that difference not sameness should be the focus:

"On meeting antipodal man one could marvel at his fundamental likeness to oneself or one could gasp at his immediately striking differences. One could regard these differences as of degree or of kind, as products of changing environment or immutable heredity, as dynamic or static, as relative or absolute, as inconsequential or hierarchical" (Stocking 1982, p45).

As Wharton (2005) observes, the question is which similarities are deemed to matter and how they are identified. She answers the latter by asserting that: "Ascribed characteristics, such as sex, race, and age, are the kinds of proxies most often used to infer similarity (or dissimilarity) with another" (2005, p60). The origins of the values accorded to differences, why some are regarded significant and others not, and just what is inferred from such proxy indicators, requires further exploration.

Social categorization

What is a social category?

If discrimination involves categorisation into 'classes of people', the use of indicators to associate an individual with a group blueprint and the oppressive imposition of that blueprint, it is worth considering what social categories are. Bradley defines them as "...constructs we employ to think about processes of social differentiation, and as lived relations to which they

refer" (1996, p202). A focus on category as 'lived relationships' would see socio-economic class as having as its axis the relations arising from the organisation of production, distribution and consumption. Gender concerns the organisation between men and women of reproduction, sexual division of labour and cultural definitions of masculinity and femininity. 'Race'/ Ethnicity refers to arrangements concerning the possession of territories and migration, while age can be understood as the way society and its institutions organise and understand progress through the life-course. Each inhabits its own 'existential location' (Bradley 1996). Often construed in terms of social structure or stratification, social categories can also be understood as social processes: "**Social categorization** refers to the processes through which individuals classify others and themselves as members of particular groups" (Wharton 2005, p55, her emphasis). The latter allows for greater fluidity, while still preserving notions of structural pattern.

Traditionally, the focus has been on socio-economic classes as the principal form of social stratification. They have their roots firmly in the rise of capitalism and industrialisation, relating to role and types of occupation, e.g. as workers or as owners of the means of production, and consequent economic powers. However, although a capitalist economy still clearly prevails in the West, it has undergone significant transformations since the days of Marx and Weber, to the point that the relevance of categorisation by socio-economic class has been challenged: "In these 'post-socialist' conflicts, group identity supplants class interest as the chief medium of political mobilization. Cultural domination supplants exploitation as the fundamental injustice" (Fraser 1997, p11). Bradley (1996) disputes the decline in importance of traditional class analysis, but cites two important limitations: it does not account for people outside the labour market (i.e. needs rethinking even in its own terms) and, while recently acknowledging other forms of inequality like gender, it continues to marginalise them. It could also be argued that those focusing on cultural groups fail adequately to take on board inter-relationships with socio-economic class.

It is 'cultural' groups, groups based on shared characteristics, with which the anti-discrimination legislation is primarily concerned, while poverty literature tends to focus on socio-economic class. Neither by any means completely overlooks the other form of categorisation. It stands to reason that 'cultural' discrimination may well have socio-economic consequences. Socio-economic disadvantage may promote cultural discrimination, or at least curtail the power of

those discriminated against to challenge it. Given the concentration of people with particular characteristics (e.g. disability, black or ethnic minority status, old age) in lower socio-economic groupings, the relationship between poverty and discrimination would seem undeniably close. However, it is not inevitable. For example, lesbian and gay people may experience discrimination and oppression, yet are not necessarily socio-economically disadvantaged. This echoes discussion of social justice in chapter 2. The possibility that poverty (as material hardship) is a cause of discrimination (misrecognition) adds further complexity to their inter-relationship (see chapter 3).

Against social categorisation

If discrimination and oppression involve definition of identity via categorisation, it is reasonable to ask whether they would be eradicated through abandoning social categories. In keeping with postmodernist and post-structuralist thinking, for queer theory the basic tenet is indeterminacy, disassembling norms and rejecting categorizations (Kirsch 2000; also Grosz 1994). It "...leads to the rejection of all categorizations as limiting and labelled by dominant power structures (Kirsch 2000, p33). An antipathy towards categorization is present in other group-based literatures. Malik states that "Race exists only as a statistical correlation, not as an objective fact. The distinction we make between different races is not naturally given but is socially defined" (1996, pp4, 5). In the disability literature Zola (1989), argues for the 'universalisation of disability', broadly on the grounds that impairment fluctuates, it can and does affect anyone, that impairment is constructed by medical and educational institutions and that policies which benefit disabled people bring wider benefits.

Whatever the challenges to essentialism, it could be argued that group identity is inevitably 'essentialist'; built on some constant characteristic, unique to its members:

"When the battle for parity of representation is conducted in the name of 'women's interests' or 'black interests', this can generate essentialist notions of a unified voice that have neither theoretical nor empirical validity" (Phillips 1997).

This suggests that the process of social categorisation is inherently oppressive. Given the multiple aspects to identity and its shifting potential, it remains unclear that individuals can be grouped without suppressing 'relevant' factors, i.e. the very process of categorisation requires a

degree of misidentification that can have a significant negative impact.

Social categorisation may not just be undesirable, but impossible in any meaningful sense. At the extreme, postmodernists envisage the breaking up of all social groupings, leaving identity free-floating, detached from the bases of social structure. Indeed, Fraser has argued for the destabilization of all identities and affiliations, including binary oppositions of male/ female, black/ white, etc and that these should be replaced with "...networks of multiple intersecting differences that are demassified and shifting" (Fraser 1997, p31; also Butler 1990).

Identities can certainly be highly complex, and different aspects will have social significance subject to context. An individual can have a proliferation of identities – female, lone parent, working class, Afro-Caribbean, disabled, etc. Both Bradley and Zappone (2003) look at the interaction of two categories/ sets of lived relationships. The latter identifies new distinct social groupings of people with two combined characteristics, while acknowledging that respondents had additional characteristics which they considered just as (sometimes more) important. The logical implication of this (which she does not pursue) is the emergence of a plethora of social groupings, with ever more restricted membership. Given the uniqueness of each individual, it could be argued that each 'social grouping' would have a membership of just one.

Reality and role

While aspects of identities may be passive, active or politicised (Bradley 1996), they can also sometimes be actively suppressed (Zappone 2003), concealed in order to 'pass'. This is not always so. As Bradley asserts, "Identities are *not* free-floating. The lived relations in which each of us is located put constraints and limits upon the possible range of identifications..." (1996, p212).

Whatever the pitfalls, it cannot be assumed that social categorisation must always be disadvantageous to those categorised. Instead it can promote "...a notion of group solidarity against the individualism of liberal humanism" (Young 1990, p166). The difference between members and non-members may be proclaimed by the former, as may be the value of their 'essential' difference. Yet, whether or not advantageous, it is far from clear how social categorisation can be avoided. For social policy concerned to distribute resources to promote

welfare, criteria need to be found to identify where welfare is at risk. Such risk is clearly associated with certain social characteristics, like old age, disability, motherhood, unemployment, poverty, etc. To assign people to social categories on such grounds is to acknowledge the existence of commonalities in the experiences of people with a shared characteristic and of the social barriers they collectively face. Moreover, to scrutinise each person minutely could necessitate an unacceptable degree of intrusion.

If social categorisation is not a sound basis for judgements on differential treatment, other bases would need to be found. To argue that differential treatment *per se* was unacceptable would be to condemn rationing of any description. It would undermine the basis for social policy concerned to distribute (inevitably limited) public resources – even where it adopts elements of universalism to meet needs³. As argued in chapter 2, it would amount to ignoring any purpose to a good and the need to distribute in accordance with it. The issue, and potentially the problem, is not differential treatment, but the basis and criteria for it, how decisions are reached and by whom. Discrimination in its positive sense of accurate identification of difference and sameness, relevant and irrelevant characteristics, may indeed be a prerequisite of effective distribution to meet social goals like greater equality and inclusion. Far from removing (normative) discrimination, to remove social categories might exacerbate it, making it impossible to assess whether people with the same characteristics and circumstances receive equitable treatment.

Seen from afar, groups become more homogenous as differences between members become less discernible and attention is focused on the one shared characteristic. Conversely, too close a focus on the individual and the barriers associated with their particular circumstances risks losing sight of common structural barriers, and may also become intrusive. In either case there is scope for misrecognition. Different lenses are required to discern different types of barrier. Yet, sometimes reductionism is unavoidable, such as when administrators are required to make speedy judgments or anticipate and pre-empt difficulties likely to be experienced by people who share a certain characteristic. The issue is whether the process enables *relevant* characteristics to be discerned, or whether these are overlooked in the course of assignment to a social category.

Indicators

Instead of social categorisation or differential treatment, the concern is the appropriateness of

indicators, markers (Wharton 2005) or signifiers (Miles and Brown 2003) used to relate individuals to categories: "We use...visible and accessible characteristics as "proxies" for qualities that would be time-consuming to determine, such as values, attitudes and beliefs" (Wharton 2005, p60). When it comes to social policy, indicators are required of aspects of identity, such as need and merit. In other situations, such as assessing suitability for a job, the challenge may be to predict behaviours.

Different forms of indicator are possible. In discussing human, particularly racial, categorisation Miles and Brown (2003) consider meanings attributed to 'somatic characteristics' or 'phenotypical difference'. To assign sex category: "...markers may include physical characteristics, such as hair, body type, or voice, or they may include aspects of dress, mannerism, or behaviour" (Wharton 2005, p21). The latter suggests that it is not just how people look or sound that counts, but what they do: "Differences and identities are performatively created through cultural processes of being claimed and elaborated: they do not pre-exist such processes. They could always in principle be otherwise" (Fraser 1997, p182). Grosz argues that the oppression of lesbian and gay people is distinctive in that the oppressions experienced by other groups are "...based primarily on what a person *is*, quite independently of what they do...In the case of homosexuals...it is less a matter of who they *are* than what they *do* that is considered offensive" (1994, p150)⁴. She observes that for other groups, what they are can over-ride or distort appreciation of what they do: thus for the anti-Semite who believes Jews are mean with money: "Nothing will count as evidence of a generous Jew" (1994, p150). The capacity for one sort of indicator to over-ride others has widespread ramifications. It illustrates the power of stereotypes to impede the recognition of relevant characteristics.

If indicators are 'performative', it follows that they are not fixed. Not only may different indicators emerge in different settings, they can have different meanings. But the impact of indicators is generally fluid, for example: "What count as markers of sex category depend heavily on cultural circumstances and thus vary widely across time, place, and social group" (Wharton 2005, p21). Identity is therefore conveyed at a symbolic level, but the meaning of symbols is inconsistent, the selection of them can vary as can their significance. This provides further clues to the causes of misrecognition and discrimination.

Beyond the mainstream

Although social categorization can be seen in terms of the stratification of mainstream society, sometimes membership of a category signals risk of, or actual, exclusion from the mainstream. Clearly, the notion of an 'underclass' underlines the possibility of existence beyond the mainstream. However, the relationship of different social categories to 'the mainstream' merits further consideration. If it can be categorized at all, queerness is, by definition, in opposition to 'the mainstream'. Grosz cites the views of female-to-male transsexual Jasper Laybutt that queerness is "...something that's eternally the alternative...What's queer now may not be queer in five year's time" (1994, p133).

Advantages to existence outside the mainstream are highlighted in the affirmative model of disability. They include the superior education that (some) disabled people (may) receive in 'special' schools, the avoidance of pressures to conform to society's usual expectations, such as to form heterosexual relationships and marry, and a heightened awareness of the oppressions endured by others (Swain and French 2000). The affirmative model could represent a rejection of a particular set of cultural expectations and structural arrangements which, if changed, could bring wider benefits:

"The inclusion of disabled people into the mainstream of society would involve the construction of a better society, with better workplaces, better physical environments, and better values including the celebration of differences" (Swain and French 2000, p578).

Unlike queer theory, this is not an in principle rejection of categorisation or of membership of the mainstream *per se*, irrespective of the form the mainstream takes.

The personal or social advantages to outright rejection of the mainstream seem poorly defined. It can be argued that distance is necessary in order to see clearly, or to be outside is necessary in order to challenge. Yet 'the mainstream' does not have to be homogenous or static. If it were wide enough to accommodate diversity, distance may be created within the mainstream. Challenges to the status quo could be seen as positive, rather than relegated to the margins.

The social origins of discrimination

Structural cultural and personal

There has already been allusion to the importance of social context and structuring as factors contributing towards the formation of an individual's identity and steering/ restricting action. Attitudes may be driven by ideology (such as capitalism) or social goals (such as the need to balance supply with demand). It appears that discrimination is not merely something expressed by one individual towards another, originating in their particular personal 'taste'.

Thompson (1998) argues that discrimination operates at structural, cultural and personal levels, with the former underpinning the latter two. Discrimination at the personal level is comprised of "...the constraints of the various social, political and economic aspects of the contemporary social order" (1998, p16). The personal is embedded into the cultural level, so that an individual's beliefs and values reflect those prevailing in their cultural context. Furthermore, "A significant feature of culture is the way in which members of a particular cultural group become so immersed in its patterns, assumptions and values that they do not even notice they are there..." (Thompson 1998, p15). There is potential for ethnocentrism "...the tendency to see the world from within the narrow confines of one culture, to project one set of norms and values onto other groups of people" (Thompson 1998, p16). It would follow that ethnocentrism too can be unconscious; perhaps only apparent to those who are not part of the dominant culture. Eurocentrism is "...the authoritative construction of norms that privilege traits associated with 'whiteness'" (Fraser 1997, p22). Authors from the gender field write of 'androcentrism', meaning that the structure and values of society are determined by men and that this disadvantages women. In all cases, the consequences may be unintentional.

Malik (1996) suggests that culture has become the new locus for discussions of difference, that ideas that were unacceptable when focused on the (alleged) genetic and biological difference of races have simply been displaced into discourses about culture. Disentangling cultural from personal is immensely problematic, yet different focuses exist for locating difference. How and if both are generated by structural factors remains unclear.

Ideology

If the relationship of structure to culture is problematic, so too is their relationship to ideology; the system of ideas underpinning an economic or political theory⁵. Capitalism could be described as the dominant ideology or perhaps the 'homogenous public norm' (Young 1990) on which Western society is founded. One way of construing the rational for social categorization, and for explaining why people with certain characteristics are accorded less value, rights or power, is to consider the relationship of those characteristics to the goals and consequences of capitalism. Indeed, this point has been made by various commentators from different fields (e.g. Oliver 1990 on disability, Malik 1996/ Miles and Brown 2003 on race, Young 1990 on gender, Kirsch 2000 on queer theory).

There are differences, though, in how the impact of capitalism is understood. For example, Oliver (1990) relates the oppression experienced by disabled people to how capitalist society treats those considered economically unproductive. Malik (1996) locates the rise of racism within the context of the divisions created by capitalist society. Kirsch (2000) links queer theory's promotion of the self as an alternative to wider social interaction with the development of late capitalist ideology and its disassembling of the social ties binding communities together. Despite their differences, what unites these authors (apart from their negative account of capitalism) is the view that the way in which society is structured by its dominant ideology and objectives has a direct impact on how identities are construed, the nature of social categorisation, and subsequent disadvantage.

This suggests that the predominance of economic imperatives and relationships in Western society not only generates categorisations of socio-economic class, they also underpin the formation of 'cultural' or characteristic-based groupings and the values attributed to them. It would seem that society is predominantly structured by ideological goals (here, the goals of capitalism) and that this is strongly associated with cultural value-base. Demands for 'cultural' equality can be interpreted as challenges to capitalist economic goals, even where those demands, in reality, do not compromise their achievement.

If the nature of society is indeed directly responsible for how identity is understood, the basis for categorisation and challenges to it and the nature of discrimination, the debate needs to be sited

within the context of social theory concerning the nature of society and/ or culture, such as postmodernism (e.g. Lyotard 1979), social constructionism (see Burr 1995), structuralism and structuration theory (Giddens 1984). While the notion that the nature of the individual and their identity is solely dependent on their genetic and biological make-up has lost ground in social theory, it is still very much present in the thinking around discrimination. In contrast, others (broadly, but not exclusively, postmodernists) argue that the nature of 'the subject' does not exist independently of social context. In a similar vein, some (broadly, structuralists) attribute individual identities and actions to the structure of their environment. Meanwhile, others (broadly, social constructionists, but also existentialists) see the processes of the relationship between them as pivotal. Structuration theory (Giddens 1984) sees structures as both the means through which social practices are enabled and their outcome. It might thus be argued that individuals' interaction with their environment is responsible, over time, for shaping the latter, as much as vice versa.

Modelling social barriers

There are a number of approaches and models concerning social structures and barriers to be found in the group-based literatures. Institutional discrimination is discussed in both race and gender-based literature. Although 'institution' and 'organisation' are often conflated in common parlance, Wharton defines an institution as "...an organized established pattern..." (2005, p65), or 'the rules of the game'. An organisation is defined (perhaps reductively) as "...a social unit established to pursue a particular goal" (2005, p65); thus many institutions (e.g. education as a social institution) contain several different types of organisation (schools of different kinds, organisations of students and parents, etc). It may be that patterns and rules are set at one level, then enacted at another.

According to Miles and Brown, "In a sense, every racism is institutional because racism is not an individual but a social creation...individuals are not racist...it is an ideology that is racist" (2003, p109). They define institutional racism as:

"...circumstances where exclusionary practices arise from, and therefore embody, a racist discourse but which may no longer be explicitly justified by such a discourse; and...circumstances where an explicitly racist content is eliminated, but other words carry the original meaning" (2003, pp109, 110).

This definition suggests that institutional racism has much in common with indirect discrimination.

In the disability field, the social model has been widely adopted, and fiercely defended, by disability activists. It can be defined as:

“the disadvantage or restriction of activity caused by a contemporary social organisation which takes no or little account of people who have physical impairments and thus excludes them from the mainstream of social activities (UPIAS 1976, cited in Oliver 1990, p11).

Since 1976, the definition has been extended to cover learning disabilities (Oliver 1995). According to Llewellyn and Hogan, “The social model of disability puts the problem back into the collective responsibility of society as a whole and there is a de-emphasis upon the individual” (2000, p159). At its extreme, it implies that by changing social organisation (encompassing environmental, organisational and attitudinal factors) all people with impairments would cease to be disabled. Shakespeare notes the potential wider applicability of the social model:

“In the social model, there is nothing to distinguish people with impairment who are socially disabled, from people with dependent children who are socially disabled. A whole range of people may in fact be disabled by barriers or prejudices” (1996, p97).

The individual origins of discrimination

It can be argued that social categorisation and associated values have nothing to do with the nature of society and its goals, but instead originate in genetic or biological differences (i.e. biological rather than social categorisation). For example, “Age, gender and ‘race’ have all been popularly conceived as having some kind of biological referent...” (Bradley 1996, p20). It may be a matter of individual personality, traits and emotions (Wharton 2005), whether or not directly attributed to biological or genetic causes. Either way, the argument goes, the reason for inequality lies not with the nature of society, but the essential qualities of individuals. Where biological or genetic ‘faults’ are deemed responsible, the door is opened to medical professionals to assume authority for ‘curing’ or managing the problem. Their influence can extend far beyond medical matters:

“The medicalization of life can be seen as a form of social control. Because important moral and political decisions (about the allocation of resources, for example) are redesignated as matters of professional decision-making, the power to influence, or even control, moral and political issues is given to doctors” (Thompson 1998, p135).

Taken to extreme, it could be argued that particular characteristics are indicative of inferiority, or perhaps threat. Therefore, to allocate people to social categories with inferior rights appropriately reflects the inferiority of people with that characteristic: this is not ‘normative’ discrimination but discrimination as accurate recognition. This approach is essentialist, seeing characteristics as fixed integral parts of an individual’s make-up, denying the role of social context or agency in the construction of identity. Interestingly, if undesirable behaviours are deemed to have biological or genetic origins, the individual may be held less responsible for them (as in the case of learning disability), on the basis that s/he has no choice to behave otherwise. There may, nonetheless, be attempts to repress or ‘manage’ behaviours to minimise destructive consequences. Overall, this mind-set tends to shut down debate about the scope to vary response or treat people differently, confirming positions of power over those ‘afflicted’.

The use of biological/ genetic explanations for inequalities, and justifications for differential treatment based on biological/ genetic factors, is found in race, disability, gender and queer theory literature. Characteristics can also be associated with health or sickness in a wider sense. This covers behaviours deemed immoral or threatening, regardless of any proven biological/ genetic origin. There are distinctions to be drawn between the medical concern with disease and sociological perspectives on sickness as a social state (Barnes and Mercer 1996, p3). Health can be conceptualised as a social construct as much as a medical condition: “...older people, disabled people or gays, lesbians and bisexuals are often presented ideologically as ill or sick” (Thompson 1998, p110). This can be expressed as a moralising, normative discourse: “To describe someone or something as ‘healthy’ is...to exercise a value judgement that involves relating the person or thing to an underlying social norm of what constitutes a desirable state” (Thompson 1998, p110).

In the race field, Herrnstein and Murray 1994 have linked IQ levels, and attributed behaviours such as lone parenthood and welfare dependency to ethnicity. The long history of anti-Semitism, the development of myths about Jewish conspiracy and behaviours, right down to the Nazi’s

measurement of facial features in order to determine Jewishness, similarly attributes much to genetic make-up. Yet:

“Geneticists have shown that 85 per cent of all genetic variation is between individuals within the same local population. A further 8 per cent is between local populations or groups within what is considered to be a major race. Just 7 per cent of genetic variation is between major races” (Malik 1996, p4)

Whatever the reality: “...in the everyday world, the facts of biological difference are secondary to the meanings that are attributed to them and, indeed, to imagined biological difference” (Miles and Brown 2003, p88).⁶ Moreover, there is evidence that people from black and minority ethnic (BME) communities can be subjected to disproportionate ‘medicalisation’. They have higher admission rates for psychiatric care, are more likely to be compulsorily admitted to hospital under the Mental Health Act 1983 and to be diagnosed schizophrenic (Skellington 1996).

In the gender field, Wharton reviews a number of quite nuanced approaches from the sociological and psychological literature to an ‘individual’ model or framework for understanding gender as: “...something that resides in the individual” (2005, p17). Firstly is the view that “...sexual dimorphism in humans is a biological fact...sexual differentiation creates two “structurally distinguishable” categories of human (citing Breedlove 1994). Yet, an estimated 2 per cent of live births are of infants that cannot easily be categorized as male or female (Blackless *et al.* 2000). Perhaps unsurprisingly given previous observations: “More than any other group...the medical profession has defined the issue of intersexuality and societal responses to it...intersexuality has come to be defined as a condition requiring medical intervention...” (Wharton 2005, p19). Others have highlighted the importance accorded to women’s ‘biological role’ as a mother, confusing childbearing with rearing (Gittens 1993). Yet, the notion that behaviours of men and women must be intrinsically different reflecting biological differences has been comprehensively challenged: “...there are virtually no traits or behaviours that reliably distinguish all men from all women” (Wharton 2005, p25). While not ruling out the possibility that some behaviours are more common among men than women (or vice versa) it does contravene purist notions of biological essentialism.

Kirsch comments on how “...the search for the ‘gay gene’ and lesbian ‘neural anomalies’ generates publicity in a continuing effort to medicalize differences in gender and sexuality” (Kirsch 2000, p53). In this field too, a metaphorical usage of concepts of health and sickness is

to be found, distinguishing socially approved from unapproved behaviours as much as individual medical pathology: "...the association of heterosexuality with the natural, the healthy...homosexuality with the unnatural, the sick..." (Case 1988-89, discussed in de Lauretis 1991, px)

Of all groups, disabled people have probably found themselves most vulnerable to medical intervention and disempowerment. According to Crow:

"...we have one fundamental difference from other movements, which we cannot afford to ignore. There is nothing inherently unpleasant or difficult about other groups' embodiment: sexuality, sex and skin colour are neutral facts. In contrast, impairment means our experiences of our bodies *can* be unpleasant or difficult" (1996, p58).

The medical model of disability: "...takes the biological reality of impairment as its fundamental starting point" (Williams 1996, p196), with medical discourse presenting disability as a form of individual pathology (Thompson 1998, Llewellyn and Hogan 2000). According to Llewellyn and Hogan:

"The medical model views all disability as the result of some physiological impairment due to damage or a disease process. The general framework of the so-called medical model emanates from the disease model used in medicine, which predisposed practitioners to think in terms of a 'condition', which needs appropriate 'treatment'" (2000, p158).

This implies that disability is to be removed by changing, i.e. curing, the person. There is no acknowledgement of disability as the social impact of impairment, or that it could, therefore, be addressed by changes to the social environment: "The overall picture is that the human being is flexible and 'alterable', whereas society is fixed and unalterable" (Llewellyn and Hogan 2000, p158).

Of course, on some occasions, irrespective of external adjustments, incapacity persists and people with physical impairments may need assistance with the most intimate of tasks. Yet, 'caring' can be double-edged: "In determining the needs and rights of citizens, humanists are said to install new and extended patterns of surveillance and control which unavoidably limit the freedom of the individual" (Rojek *et al.* 1988, p115, cited in Thompson 1998, p59). It is a matter of separating caring from policing; rethinking caring so that it becomes empowerment:

“Life politics involved identifying and addressing barriers to self-actualization. A key aspect of this is *empowerment* – the process of supporting individuals and groups in exercising as much control over their own lives as possible.”(Thompson 1998, p40)⁷.

Understanding behaviours

Another potentially medicalised slant on how individuals acquire understandings of themselves and appropriate behaviours is to be found in psychological theories, such as theories of socialisation. This extends beyond individual biology and genetics as explanations of attributes, competencies and behaviours, e.g. the socialisation processes through which people take on gendered qualities and characteristics (Wharton 2005). Theories of social learning tend to view people (particularly children) as lumps of clay, moulded by their environment and, in particular, the reinforcements received for gender-appropriate or inappropriate behaviours. The socialization process is seen as driven by external forces, suggesting that this branch of theory is moving away from individualised explanations towards social environmental ones. In contrast, cognitive approaches are concerned with the internal motivations of children to understand themselves, and how gender meanings are internalised and used to construct identity. Identification theory sees gender identification as resulting more from unconscious psychological processes. Chodorow (1978) attributes key features of gender identity to women being the primary carers of children and the differing implications for male and female children in terms of their development of ego boundaries and gender identity.

In a broadly similar vein, Llewelyn and Hogan (2000) discuss the use of systems analysis to study children with physical disabilities. This focuses on ‘process-person-context’, examining “...the synergistic influence of the characteristics of the person and of the environment that produces the behaviour.” The model lends itself to real-life contextual research, e.g. before and after a given transition point such as entering mainstream schooling, “...examining the mutual influence of the school community, education system and the self” (2000, p160). The aims to find explanations for individuals’ behaviours or competencies, and to that extent could be considered an ‘individual’ rather than ‘social’ model, notwithstanding the exploration of social factors. Much like theories of social learning described by Wharton, Llewelyn and Hogan present the transactional model as promoting consideration of how negative perceptions of others can result in negative self-belief and avoidance, how interactions can reinforce behaviours:

“The transactional model emphasizes that many behaviours do not have a single or unique cause and draws attention to the large number of variables interacting and, indeed, multiplying their effects as a result of the interactions taking place” (2000, p162).

The biopsychosocial (BPS) model, incorporating a psychological component, has recently emerged in the disability field as an approach to understanding the nature of incapacity for work and steering approaches to rehabilitation. Broadly, this aims to address the fact that it is not possible to assess impairment in isolation from the person with that impairment (Waddell *et al.* 2002). Experiences of physical pain and responses to it will always be filtered through a person’s beliefs and expectations about their situation:

“The extent to which psychological and social processes can influence physical activity should not be under-estimated, and vice versa...Disability is not only a question of physical impairment, but of behaviour and performance too. Performance depends on anatomical and physiological capacities, but also on psychological and social resources...ability may be set by physiological limits but performance is set by psychological limits” (Waddell *et al.* 2002, p12).

Despite its name, the role of social barriers generally receives insufficient weight by purveyors of this model. For example, Waddell and Burton’s (2004) discussion of the social adjustments required in the context of return to/ retention of work is confined, firstly, to the need for all players to accept this as the primary goal and, secondly, the need for ‘modified work’ to match temporarily reduced capacity. There is no reference to the vast range of additional social barriers which can intervene, such as inaccessible transport or premises or inflexible community care provision. Rehabilitation practitioners may make reference to ‘the whole person’, but systematic analysis of environmental impacts is rarely accounted for, even where acknowledged (Williams 1996). The model also is vulnerable to the interpretation that disabled people’s own assessment of their capacity should be distrusted, or that barriers of all types can be overcome simply by building confidence and raising expectations.

Processes and interactions

Categorisation can be seen as emanating from neither social objectives nor individual attributes, but as a necessary device to enable interaction between individuals and social collectivities (institutions and organisations). This is consistent with social constructionist theory which sees

the proper focus as:

“...the social practices engaged in by people, and their interactions with each other. Explanations are to be found neither in the individual psyche nor in social structures, but in the interactive processes that take place routinely between people” (Burr 1995, pp7-8).

There are also clear parallels with structuration theory (Giddens 1984).

As with social and individual explanations, interactionist or process-based approaches are found in different group-based literatures. Queer theory could be seen as ‘interactionist’ in casting identity as ‘performative’: “...there need not be a “doer behind the deed,” but...the “doer” is variably constructed in and through the deed” (Butler 1990, p142). Wharton writes of ethnomethodologists’ accounts of ‘doing gender’, noting that they have been criticised for under-emphasising the constraints shaping gender displays: “...ethnomethodologists focus on each performance’s unique details to the exclusion of how performances differ systematically...” (2005, p56). In their emphasis on uniqueness and indeterminacy, it could be argued that such approaches are more aligned with postmodernism than social constructionism.

In contrast, interactive models in the disability field view barriers more in terms of logical consequences.

“As the interaction between the individual and their environment is a **social process**, this implies that disability is dynamic, occurring over time and within a particular social context. The problem is not **located** either in the individual or the social alone, so dynamics could be altered through elements of both individual and social change...Problems can arise at a systems level; hence the solutions concern changes that need to be made to the functioning of a system as a whole” (Howard 2003, p5, her emphasis).

In interactive models barriers arise from the interface between the individual and their social environment, and the nature of the systems through which that interface occurs. This suggests that a better interface may be achieved through adjustment to individual (e.g. through acquiring new skills, condition management techniques and/ or confidence), social context (e.g. by removing environmental barriers, promoting more flexible organisation of services or work, or changing public attitudes) and/ or to systems (e.g. changing benefit rules, or the ways in which employment programmes, health services, etc, are accessed and delivered). Through focusing on processes, barriers of different types may emerge at different stages, and consequently different

forms of adjustment are required.

Other interactionist theories concern the usage of 'markers' and responses to similarity or difference (Wharton 2003). Status characteristic theory focuses on how characteristics are linked to expectations and how they are used to organize interactions. Differential expectations, judgments about worthiness, power and likely performance, are triggered by gender, age, race (among others). However, which status characteristics are deemed relevant, and awareness of them, will be subject to context and the purpose of the interaction. This again underlines the importance of indicators and how their symbolic significance can have a direct impact on inclusion.

Developing a framework

It is clear that a generic framework of discrimination could draw on a rich variety of conceptualizations, levels and perspectives. There are attempts to combine elements, with interactionist models doing so most explicitly. Gender is described by Wharton as a "...multilayered system, operating at the individual, interactional and institutional levels" (2005, p70). While this may suggest a framework with three components, it is not clear whether each separately could be considered a framework, given the strands to each. The biopsychosocial model in the disability field looks as if it should address different types of barrier, but in practice has been used more as an elaboration of an individual, mostly medical, model.

However, the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health⁸ (known as the ICF) on which Waddell *et al.*'s BPS model is allegedly based, may offer the prospect of a more comprehensive and balanced analysis. It aims to provide a unified standard framework and language for the description of health-related states. To that end, it integrates medical and social models, using a biopsychosocial approach to capture the various perspectives of functioning. It focuses on 'constituents of health' rather than 'consequences of disease'. The framework has two parts. The first covers components of functioning and disability, under which are grouped bodily functions (physiological or psychological), body structures (anatomical parts of the body) and activities (the execution of a task or action by an individual) and participation (involvement in a life situation). The second deals with contextual factors: environmental factors (physical,

social and attitudinal factors) and personal factors (such as an individual's background, gender, age, race, coping styles, education, behaviour pattern). Interestingly, the ICF is described as 'universal' not just applying to disabled people but to all. Moreover, it testifies to how the concept of health (and by implication the boundaries of health professionals' authority) has expanded to encompass just about all aspects of human activities, as well as the social environment.

A very different clustering of features comes together in what Miles and Brown (2003) term the 'race paradigm'. This is founded in race-as-ideology, which distorts social relations and representation of human beings, notwithstanding the potentially positive uses of the concept of race as a focus for political struggle. They critique everyday language uses of 'race' and 'racism'. The paradigm emphasizes the shifting meaning of race and racism and the ongoing importance of socio-economic class and political migration. They reject analysis of racism on a phenotypical basis, instead proposing analysis of its historical development alongside nationalism. They also acknowledge race as having a political and moral dimension, as well as a social-scientific one.

Thompson's 'PCS analysis' (discussed above) argued that discrimination exists at different levels (Personal, Cultural, Structural), and that these levels interact. Although described in broad terms, the precise mechanisms of interaction were not discussed.

While each provides helpful signposts, none of these offers an adequate generic framework. Each leaves out potentially important concepts, or fails to address key dilemmas.

Conclusion

It is possible to draw out some key themes from the above. For various reasons, not least to prevent misrecognition of the causes of empirically similar outcomes, it is necessary to develop an understanding of discrimination as a generic phenomenon. It seems helpful to conceptualise discrimination and oppression as potential features of a process, with oppression the frequent outcome of discrimination in its normative sense. The relationship between discrimination, oppression and poverty is complex, yet it is possible to trace their theoretical interaction. Their interplay can be close, but links between material poverty and membership of particular social

categories prone to discrimination are not inevitable. Oppressive limitations may be a consequence of poverty or discrimination, or a prerequisite for inclusion.

If 'recognition' is necessary for socially just distribution (chapter 2), then the conceptualisation of group and individual identities must be of critical importance. So too must be understandings of the relationship of characteristics to criteria for distribution, like need or capacity. Yet, identities, needs and capacities, and relationships between them, may not be fixed; socially constructed rather than biologically inevitable. The task of recognition is more complex than at first appears. Recognition is important, not just in acknowledging and valuing the cultural and other differences of groups based on shared characteristics, but regarding the impact of the dominant culture and distributive structures on people with different characteristics. It may also be important when it comes to awareness of individual identities; how they may deviate from group-based stereotypes and how both individual and group-based identities can be constructed by social context. If the latter is multi-faceted and dynamic, so too must be identity.

Thus, not only does cultural recognition entail separating relevant from irrelevant characteristics, subject to the purpose of the good and consequently just criteria for distribution, it first necessitates recognition of the qualities of an individual and the social structure and cultural norms of the environment where they are located. It is then a matter of recognizing how structures and norms impact on the construction of identities and on understandings of the purposes of goods. In both cases, cultural norms will play a major role in the selection of indicators and their meanings. When separating relevant from irrelevant characteristics, it is important to question whether characteristics and their impact are 'fixed' or a product of their socio-cultural environment and could thus be changed through changes to that environment. This suggests that accurate assessment necessitates different lenses, to identify barriers shared by all with a certain characteristic and the particular barriers experienced by individuals, and to understand their source.

Study of the separate group-based literatures reveal striking similarities in the concepts articulated and dilemmas debated, notwithstanding sometimes significant differences in emphasis and discourse. Broadly, some models concentrate on the individual and, to differing degrees, exclude the impact of social factors in creating inequality. For some, the interest is in the drivers of understandings and expressions of identity or capacity, how it is conveyed and

understood by others and what drives responses. Others see the nature and consequent impact of social structure and culture as the explanation for inequality, often ignoring any impact of individual traits or behaviours. Others focus on the systems through which individuals and their socio-cultural environment interact. There is a wide divergence of views about how fixed or fluid the different components and their interactions are, or have the potential to be.

This could delineate the parameters of a generic, comprehensive model of discrimination. There is no obvious reason why many of the theories and models discussed should not be compatible, and perhaps mutually supporting, each contributing to a fuller appreciation of the barriers to inclusion on the basis of valuing diversity rather than imposing conformity. Neither is it obvious that any of these elements *in principle* is only relevant to one and not other characteristics whichever field they originate from, e.g. to understanding gender rather than disability discrimination. The critical area for development, though, concerns the identification of what logically must be fixed and where there exists room for manoeuvre, to maximize the successful inclusion of diversity without jeopardizing the integrity of the whole. To do this, there are other key gaps to address. The processes through which individuals and different 'levels' of society and its institutions interact remain ill-defined. Through breaking these down, it may become possible to identify where barriers of different sorts can intervene, and how and if adjustments can be achieved to remove them. Further analysis may be possible to determine what features of the social environment are likely to be most important in steering how those relationships are structured and enacted, the nature of 'indicators' and their attributed values.

A better understanding of how all these impact on individual identity and capacity, on understandings of and responses to identity, may provide fresh insights into the nature of (normative) discrimination; how it provokes exclusion and how it can be addressed. As with previous chapters, the importance of social processes and their deconstruction is indicated. Such study should bring lessons for the design and delivery of social policy aiming to maximize the inclusion of diversity. The challenges include how to structure relationships between citizen and state, and how to design policy to recognize the potential variety of barriers, avoiding the construction of inaccurate social categories or individualising to the extent that inequitable treatment becomes impossible to discern. This will be pursued in section 2 of this thesis.

¹ Such patterns pertain to other characteristic-defined groups too, e.g. disabled people, older people, etc.

² A separate though important question concerns the social impact of having less or no qualifications, and whether this necessarily has to result in disadvantage or increase the risk of exclusion.

³ Examples of a universal approach would include child benefit, paid to all the main carers of children. Although described as a universal benefit, it would be more accurate to describe it as a non-means tested, non contributory benefit. It is payable whether or not the main carer is in work. However, although access criteria are less restrictive than for many benefits, there still are criteria, e.g. of residency and to that extent it is not 'universal'. A different example would be universal rights to health-care through the NHS. In practice, though, the reality of access to services and to treatments is far from equitable.

⁴ That queer politics should just be about the right to 'do' or commit certain acts has been challenged, some arguing gays and lesbians should also have the right to look like gays and lesbians (Wilchins, 2004)

⁵ Ideology too is a contested term, meaning anything from a "...non-evaluative description of beliefs..." to "...the very specific Marxist reference to ideas which serve to obscure the contradictions of capitalism and thus sustain it" (Levitas 1998, p3).

⁶ Arguments concerning genetic similarities between 'races' should not be overplayed: a high proportion of our genetic make-up is also the same as over species.

⁷ See also Duckworth's Empowerment model, which focuses on improving self-esteem.

⁸ Agreed by the 54th World Health Assembly on 22 May 2001, Resolution WHA54.21.

Chapter 5: Social Exclusion

Introduction

The final set of concepts, theories and discourses to be discussed are those falling under the banner of social exclusion. Given the focus of this thesis, these should be directly relevant.

Although social exclusion has been the subject of theorising and of empirical research, the relationship between them is not always clear. Theorising often occurs at a fairly abstract level, much of it deriving from the field of sociology, while empirical study generally takes social exclusion to mean anything to do with disadvantage affecting groups or geographical areas, tracing correlations between occurrences.

Social exclusion may be inevitable, whether because it is "...a normal and integral part of the power dynamics of modern society" (Room 1999, p172) or because "...virtually any social distinction or affiliation excludes somebody" (Silver 1994, p541). There must always be exclusion if there is to be clarity about inclusion, and if it is to be meaningful: "...throughout history, all the main axes of inclusion have been simultaneously axes of exclusion" (Stewart 2000, p55). The aim is not so much to prevent all exclusion, but to widen and diversify routes to inclusion.

As will be discussed, there are many discourses found in social exclusion theory. These might build on or reframe themes originating elsewhere, shedding further light on the nature of disadvantage and exclusion. Even if it has little unique to add, the term is not necessarily redundant: if it shows how concepts are interdependent that in itself would be a new and positive theoretical development.

This chapter begins by reviewing the origins and issues around definitions of social exclusion. It then explores key themes in the social exclusion literature, how and if they 'fit' together. Consideration is given to how theorizing in this area (or areas) 'fits' with theory on social justice, poverty and discrimination and what it (they) contributes to the development of theory

aiming to maximize the inclusion of diversity on a basis of empowerment.

Defining social exclusion

There is widespread consensus concerning the confusion surrounding the meaning of social exclusion. Conversely, views diverge widely about what an inclusive society means (and consequently about the concept of social exclusion), the objectives and values of any route map to achieving it, any over-arching principle, and its aims vis-à-vis inequality or an appropriate model of citizenship (Lister 2000). Instead, there exist "... a wide diversity of conceptions or discourses within social inclusion" (Stewart 2000, p3; also Gore 1995; Silver 1994; Hills 2002).

This ambiguity has been politically helpful. In the late 1980s/ early 1990s, when politicians denied the existence of poverty in Britain, it enabled dialogue on disadvantage to continue (Walker 1995; Veit-Wilson 1998; Berghman 1995; Room 1995). Its wide acceptance makes it a powerful concept, enabling imperceptible shifts between discourses: "... 'social exclusion' can, almost unnoticed, mobilize a redistributive argument behind a cultural or integrationist one – or represent cultural or integrationist arguments as redistributive" (Levitas 1998, p27). As a relative newcomer to the scene it "... offers a way of reconceptualizing and understanding social disadvantage as the globalization of economic relations occurs" (Gore 1995, p9), suggesting the prospect of a new concept with which to describe new forms of disadvantage. Perhaps in keeping with postmodernism, multiplicity of approaches and fragmentation of thought are a fitting reflection of complexity and fragmentation arising from globalisation, indicating the futility of the quest for a metanarrative of social exclusion.

Whatever the truth of this, ambiguity is profoundly unhelpful when it comes to empirical research and policy development: "... it remains too incoherent and confused to serve as a reference point for policy and research..." (Room 1999, pp166-7). To carry out research you need to know what you are investigating; developing policy to tackle a problem is difficult without knowing what the problem is. Yet, despite its current academic prominence and a vast and rapidly increasing literature, "... there have been remarkably few attempts to define the concept properly" (Burchardt *et al.* 1999, p227). Failure to undertake a serious critique of the central concept has resulted in "... a form of 'sound-bite sociology'." (Ratcliffe 2000, p169).

In as much as there has been any attempt to identify a 'central concept', social exclusion is understood as "...an umbrella concept for which there is limited theoretical underpinning" (Oyen 1997, p63 cited in Sen 2000 p2; Ratcliffe 2000). It seems that theoretical connections have yet to be forged between the concepts and discourses underneath. A first step is to pinpoint what these concepts and discourses are.

Poverty and inequality

Social exclusion as poverty

It has been suggested that social exclusion is nothing more than a rebranding of poverty; a politically convenient euphemism (Lister 2000; Rodgers 1995; Room 1995a). If distinguishable, poverty might provide a benchmark against which to assess the concept of social exclusion. As benchmarks go, it is not the most stable, there being more than one understanding of poverty (chapter 3).

According to Burchardt *et al.*: "An individual is socially excluded if he or she does not participate in key activities of the society in which he or she lives" (2002b, p30). The Observatory on National Policies to Combat Social Exclusion defines it in terms of the social rights of citizens to basic living standards and participation in their society's major social and occupational participation (Gore 1995). How these differ from Townsend's earlier definition of poverty, or why they necessarily move beyond questions of the adequacy of material resources is hard to discern. Lister goes a little further, describing social exclusion as "...embracing a variety of ways in which people may be denied full participation in society and full effective rights of citizenship in the civil, political and social spheres" (2000, p38). Powell is more specific, suggesting that the broader concept of social exclusion: "...refers not only to material deprivation, but to the inability of the poor to fully exercise their social, cultural and political rights as citizens" (1995, pp22-3). While an emphasis on rights in different spheres is a development, a rights-based approach to poverty is not new, neither is the notion of multi-dimensionality (chapter 3). Nor is it a new proposition that the litmus test is participation in customary activities.

For Room:

“The notion of poverty is primarily focused upon distributional issues: the lack of resources at the disposal of an individual or a household. In contrast, notions such as social exclusion focus primarily on relational issues, in other words, inadequate social participation, lack of social integration and lack of power” (1995, p5).

While ‘social relations’ are not necessarily contingent on matters of distribution and resources, there may be more helpful ways to approach this. As previously discussed, Townsend (1979) argued that ability to participate was a matter of the distribution of material resources, and there is nothing here to indicate that social integration and power might not also be contingent on their possession. This might represent a more sophisticated or differently framed appreciation of the effects of inadequate material resources. It does not inevitably mean such effects are attributable to something else.

However, for Burchardt *et al.*, the key defining difference is that social exclusion “...allows the phenomenon of interest to extend beyond non-participation due to lack of material resources” (2002a, p5). While remaining a central cause, non-participation may also arise through: “...discrimination, chronic ill-health, geographical location, or cultural identification, for example” (2002a, p6). Due to these and other factors like physical inaccessibility, lack of child-care or transport, or even fear, “...there are individuals who are unable to participate despite having adequate income” (2002a, p6). For Hills, “Simply being given cash...does not by itself make someone part of mainstream society” (2002, p227). As the discrimination literature has shown, it may also (or instead) be impeded by negative approaches to ‘difference’. According to Flaherty *et al.*: “...by no means everyone who is poor is socially excluded, while it is clear that many who are seen as socially excluded because of, for instance, their gender, sexuality, ethnicity, ability, age or location are not poor” (2004, p18; also Lister 2000; Barry 2002; Levitas 1998). This seems to align social exclusion more closely with discrimination than with poverty/distributional issues, or indicate that it embraces both.

Berghman (1995) draws a distinction between processes and outcomes, arguing that poverty (narrowly interpreted as lack of disposable income) and deprivation (seen as more comprehensive) are both outcomes of the dynamic processes of impoverishment and social exclusion respectively. He posits that poverty is a specific form of social exclusion. If, as it seems, this amounts to saying that income poverty is part of wider deprivation, this does not take

us very far. Neither does it address why social exclusion cannot be an outcome as well as a process. Indeed, Walker (1995) positions social exclusion as an outcome of poverty:

“...increased social isolation, reduced morale, deviant behaviours and even the experience of ostracism...are all linked more or less directly to the limited choice and restricted opportunities imposed by inadequate resources” (1995, p116).

Other interpretations of the connection between poverty and social exclusion are possible. It could be that poverty – as material deprivation – is a component of social exclusion, i.e. it is one among a number of factors that may prevent or impede social interaction. However, taking a wider approach to poverty, not being able to interact freely with others could count as one among many forms of deprivation, thus if social exclusion refers to the breakdown of social relations it becomes a constituent of poverty (Sen 2000).

There has been some shift in academic as well as political focus, towards the processes and dynamics of multi-dimensional disadvantage, away from an over-riding emphasis on income and the measurement of living standards. This may partially have been driven by new longitudinal datasets, notably the British Households Panel Survey (BHPS), and the European Community Household Panel (Room 1999), making it possible to track changes over time, patterns and interconnections (also Silver 1994). Some have defined and empirically measured social exclusion by identifying a series of indicators developed around income, unemployment, GCSE attainment and Standard Mortality Ratios (Robinson and Oppenheim 1998); or income, labour market engagement, social interaction, and health (Howarth *et al.* 1998), with subsequent studies tracking annual changes. This approach is entirely consistent with longstanding traditions of measuring poverty and deprivation (Burchardt *et al.* 2002a). While this shift undoubtedly has implications for policy, as Hills argues (2002), it does not follow that a new concept called social exclusion has emerged; a multidimensional dynamic view is needed to understand poverty properly.

Room identifies five key features to emerge in the ‘reconfiguration’ represented by social exclusion: from financial to multi-dimensional disadvantage; from static to dynamic analysis; from a focus on individual or household resources to those of local communities; from distributional to relational dimensions of stratification and disadvantage and from a continuum of inequality to ‘catastrophic rupture’ (1999, p167). He proceeds to argue that the first three are

evident in poverty research. However, "...the notion of social exclusion consolidates and integrates five key elements in the definition and study of disadvantage" (1999, p171). For Room (1999), at the core of social exclusion is the 'catastrophic rupture' of relational links with wider society, provoked by long-term and multi-dimensional disadvantage, reinforced by the material and cultural degradation of local neighbourhoods. Yet, it is most unlikely that *all* relationships with wider society will be ruptured. This would be to support the accounts of neo-liberals who assert that the 'underclass' inhabit a culturally separate world.

Numerous opposing views clearly hold. Social exclusion is the same as poverty - and a political device to deflect attention away from poverty and the centrality of income adequacy. Social exclusion is a component of poverty and vice versa. Whatever the truth, the concept of social exclusion is often discussed in terms of its relationship to poverty and attempts to break free have not always been persuasive. Nonetheless, an emphasis on multi-dimensionality, time-based processes, social relations and rights in different spheres may signal a new direction.

Social exclusion as inequality

For there to be consistency in the meaning of 'social exclusion', there needs to be consistency regarding meanings of 'social' – as in understandings of 'society' – as well as 'exclusion'. The greater divergence there is in social understandings and experiences, the greater the difficulty. It is not just that discourses can shift (Levitas 1998), even where there is a common theoretical approach conclusions can differ widely if what it is applied to similarly differs (hence the importance of comparative empirical research). This further implies that systems built on a basis of shared understandings and experiences cannot work if divergence is too great. For example, Taylor (2000) remarks on the need for some degree of equality or sameness within the population if democracy is to work.

Room writes that: "The ...elongation of the rewards hierarchy...erodes all sense that we live in a single national society, with shared criteria for the distribution of rewards." (1999, p173). Elongation has occurred most dramatically in an upward direction, resulting in a new breed of super-rich. The gap between them and people on benefit "...belies the notion that people share a common citizenship" (Room 1999, p173). This raises the prospect that those who 'opt out' of mainstream society may not be those at the bottom of the pile, but those at the top: "...the revolt

of the elites is as much a problem as welfare dependency...” (Gray 2000, p23; also Giddens 1998). Yet, “For anyone who wishes to see an inclusive society it is highly desirable that middle class people stay in public services...”, although incentives to do so might prove anti-egalitarian (Gray 2000, p29). There is obviously a difference between ‘the elite’ and the middle classes. If the former opt out they will take with them disproportionate wealth that might in theory be redistributed, but which these days could easily be moved to a less progressive tax environment. If the middle classes opt out of public services, support for them to be funded via taxation is eroded, leaving poor services for poor people.

As for those at the bottom of the social ladder, Gray’s premise (2000) seems to be that inclusion can be achieved simply through meeting basic needs (defined in relative terms), after which distribution is irrelevant (failing to acknowledge cultural or personal factors). Providing basic needs are met and opportunities are equal, he argues that inequalities are irrelevant for inclusion. While he acknowledges that equal opportunities can result in wide discrepancies in outcome, it can be argued that for opportunities to be equal requires some equality of starting point. Inequalities in outcome of one process may further erode equality of starting point for subsequent processes.

This reveals a problem with the shift of focus implied by social exclusion: “It represents the primary significant division in society as one between an included majority and an excluded minority...Attention is drawn away from the inequalities and differences among the included” (Levitas 1998, p7). Consequently, understanding of social problems and action to address them may be diminished. More positively, if social exclusion does indeed take a multi-dimensional, comprehensive approach to disadvantage, the scope widens to encompass aspects of social living other than income and wealth which need to be more equal (e.g. choice, mobility) if the bottom line is ‘human well-being’ (Gray 2000).

It could reasonably be concluded that “The ideal of inclusion...is distinct from any ideal of equality; but it acts as a constraint on inequalities at both the bottom and the top” (Gray 2000, p31). However, some conceptualise social exclusion very differently: “Exclusion is not about graduations of inequality, but about mechanisms that act to detach groups of people from the social mainstream” (Giddens 1998, p104; also Gore 1995; Room 1999; Wilson 1987). Yet, there is no obvious reason why unfettered inequality might not itself be a mechanism of detachment.

Exploring socio-cultural context

Linking 'social' to 'exclusion'

Manifestations of society, its structures and culture/s may be empirically describable, as may expressions of exclusion. If so, it may then prove possible to trace correlations between the former and the latter. By the same token, theories about disadvantage can be expected to differ according to their socio-cultural context. At a more abstract theoretical level, there are different ways in which the phenomenon known as society can be conceptualized. This too should have implications for conceptualizations of disadvantage.

According to Room (1995a), poverty (the identification of 'baskets of goods' and 'poverty lines') is primarily an Anglo-Saxon/ British product whereas social exclusion comes from a French continental model. They emanate from different intellectual traditions associated with different geographical areas and cultures. Now that it has become more widely adopted, social exclusion "...is generally agreed to be a *relative* concept - relative, that is, to the time and place in question" (Burchardt *et al.* 2002b, p31; also Silver 1994; Stewart 2000). Taken in isolation from their chronological and social context, understandings of social exclusion can seem completely disparate and unconnected. However, it may be that the nature of the dynamic processes which detach people from the social mainstream change over time and place, as do the key relationships attaching them to it. Furthermore, as illustrated by the section on poverty, a 'new' concept will be assessed against, and discussed in terms of, the dominant approach preceding it.

If, as it appears, the nature of socio-cultural context is critical to determining the form that exclusion takes, it will be helpful to consider what the components and variables of that context are.

'Shaping' society, inclusion and exclusion

The starting point for theorizing around social exclusion/ inclusion logically should be the supposition that there exists some form of empirically discernible entity, broadly 'mainstream society', which individuals (or groups) can be part of, or can be (or become) excluded or

detached from. This then raises questions about the nature and composition of mainstream society, the mechanisms through which individuals are connected to it, how membership of the mainstream is enacted and understood, and how connecting mechanisms break down. Through exploring these, it may become apparent how to re-shape mainstream society, or re-engineer such mechanisms, to increase access and prevent break down.

The distinction between 'mainstream society' and 'mechanisms for engagement' may be hard to distinguish. Mainstream society can be conceptualized as comprised *of* mechanisms for engagement. With echoes of Giddens' structuration theory (1984), Room suggests that:

“...the mainstream society from which people are taken as being excluded must itself be analysed problematically as the product of active human agency over time, in which different social groups continuously contest and assert their relationship to each other” (1999, p171).

Yet it may not just be a question of how groups relate to each other, but how they relate to institutions and collective structures operating at different societal levels (supranational, national or local). It could then be argued that mainstream society consists of its institutions, mechanisms for engagement with them, and engaged groups or individuals.

For some, social exclusion has a different geometric 'shape' than class or inequality. According to Touraine (1991, cited in Burchardt *et al.* 2002a, p3), these concern positions on a vertical axis, whereas social exclusion is about being either 'in' or 'out' of a circle. The notion of a vertical axis is consistent with the proposition that a poverty line can be drawn, with those below in poverty. Anderson (1999) sees social exclusion as about insider/ outsider status, envisaging this as 'horizontal stratification' rather than circular (how many strata are to be found positioned along the horizontal axis is unclear, as is whether they might represent degrees of ex/inclusion). This is accompanied by vertical stratification representing unequal resources and status. However, the interesting question of how the two axes inter-relate is not discussed; whether a person's social position could be plotted in an 'outside' horizontal stratum and a well-resourced/ high status vertical stratum, or 'inside' yet poorly resourced/ low status.

Drawing on Touraine's (1991) vision of the 'shape' of ex/inclusion as a circle, questions arise about the nature of the boundary to be traversed to achieve inclusion within. It might be defined by 'public norms' (chapter 4) which, if homogenous, might be expected to set a rigid boundary

with clear-cut access criteria. If heterogenous, boundaries may be more permeable with various ways to gain access.

According to Barry:

“...a society marked by a combination of market economy and liberal democratic institutions is liable to have two thresholds of social exclusion. The lower one divides those who habitually participate in the mainstream institutions from those who are outside them. The upper threshold is the one that divides those in the middle from those who can detach themselves from the mainstream institutions” (2002, p17).

This might suggest that the circle has a hollow core. However, Levitas argues that “...the real society is not that constituted by the (unequal) 70 per cent, to which the rest are marginal or from which they are excluded; it is made up of the whole 100 per cent...” (Levitas 1998, p188). This might be depicted as an outer ring, encompassing all. Excluded people too are a feature of society.

To think of ‘society’ as ‘containing’ a homogenous set of activities, having a single boundary or a single gateway to inclusion would be wildly over-simplistic. Perhaps society should be thought of as spherical, rather than flat and linear, three dimensional rather than two. Perhaps it is comprised of numerous vertical axes each representing inequality of different sorts, all converging at a central point, with different forms of measurement and cut-off points and people positioned along each. Positions are not necessarily fixed, but might fluctuate over time, making the structure (or organism?) four dimensional rather than three.

Levels of society: system integration and social integration

It is a familiar notion that societies are composed of ‘levels’ which interact. Levels may be described in terms of macro, meso and micro, systems and social, or as supra-national, national, regional and local, down to family/ household and individual. When concerns are around inclusion and cohesion, the question is how structures, systems and actors (and possibly cultures) at each level (however conceptualized) and across levels are integrated. Analogies could be drawn with Thompson’s (1998) conceptualization of discrimination operating at structural, cultural and personal levels, with the structural level underpinning the other two. Yépez suggests that this is the primary concern of social exclusion as it “...aims less to identify

the contours of empirically observed reality than to highlight the relationships and processes, between micro and macro mechanisms, between individual and collective dimensions..." (1994, p15 cited in Gore 1995, p6).

According to Lockwood's classic theory, "...the problem of social integration focuses upon the orderly or conflictual relationships between *actors*, the problem of system integration focuses on the orderly or conflictual relationships between the *parts* of a social system" (1992, p400). Quite what 'parts of a social system' consist of is somewhat unclear (Mouzelis 1991). His main thesis is summarized by Mortenson:

"...structural contradictions or system disintegrative relations between different parts or subsystems of society...are the basis for social conflict or social disintegration...System contradictions are thus intertwined with social conflicts..." (1999, p19).

Put simply, dysfunctions or incoherences in the way institutions (e.g., economic, bureaucratic, legal, political) relate to each other, and in the structures and processes of each separately will be expressed through dysfunctions and incoherences in the positions and resources consequently accorded to 'actors'. This will in turn provoke social conflict, either between groups of actors, or between groups of actors and institutional structures and processes. It might also lead to dysfunctions in identity and (consistent with discussion of interactive models in chapter 4) barriers to participation. However, as Lockwood acknowledges, we should be wary of presuming that incoherence must always lead to relationship rupture or structural breakdown.

According to Mortenson (1999), Giddens' structuration theory (1984) attempts to integrate (or dissolve conceptually oppositional differences between) 'structure' and 'agency' and between 'macro' and 'micro'. To summarise, Giddens' thesis is that (macro-level) structures are created by recursive or routinised (micro-level) expressions of agency. However, although structures are expressed through routinised enactment, institutional objectives and rules do not necessarily originate in repetitious micro-level enactment, neither can they *necessarily* be changed by it. Neither does this adequately address how exclusion arises, if enactment is tantamount to participation, yet the latter may be prohibited by institutional rules¹, particularly access criteria. Structures can prevent, and customarily constrain, participation. Despite Giddens' intentions, this risks becoming another manifestation of the 'structure versus agency' debate, with power here located disproportionately with agency.

Mouzelis (1991) defines systems integration as concerning the overall way a system functions, its condition of existence and its rules, whereas social integration focuses on how collective actors behave and how they apply (or circumvent) those rules. For Mouzelis (1991), micro and macro-level phenomena are linked through social hierarchies. Macro-actors (decision-makers representing collectivities, or individuals with power to make their decisions felt) have a key role to play in social integration. Presumably they may also be critical to systems integration, where they have powers to change rules.

While accepting that different levels interact, exactly how they do so remains unclear. Giddens defines social integration as “Reciprocity between actors in contexts of co-presence” and systems integration as “Reciprocity between actors or collectivities across extended time-space” (1984, p28). Whatever the objections to the notion that co-presence can be related to a particular ‘level’ of interaction (particularly in an era of IT and texting) this raises interesting questions about the mechanisms through which communication and interaction occur. It does not explain (or attempt to explain) how different levels impact on each other to shift dynamics towards integration or disintegration.

Anderson posits that for ‘underclass’ advocates “...the linkage between system integration and social integration is one of purely individual incentives” (1999, p137), with ‘bad’ (system-derived) incentives stimulating behavioural deficiencies, dependency and rule-breaking, and ‘good’ incentives promoting economic efficiency, stable families and so on. He observes, though, that incentives are two-way, also driving collective (macro) actors. In contrast, the ‘systems’-level crisis concerns the imbalance created by the globalized economy, diminishing the powers of national political subsystems. For Anderson “...the creation of multiple actor networks is a key issue in changing the power matrix...” (1999, p139). It is necessary to create:

“...new types of governance, which can, first, integrate actors representing interests at the bottom of the social ladder and, second, enable the actors to operate across different spatial levels: the local, regional, national and global. The latter task is necessary because the forces of exclusion in the post-Ford era operate on many levels; so the inclusive counter-forces must do likewise” (1999, p139).

Dimensions, spheres and systems

Social exclusion is often described as 'multi-dimensional', reflecting "...inequalities in many dimensions – economic, social, political, cultural" (Rodgers 1995a, p50). The relationship of dimensions to spheres (e.g. Walzer 1983) and of both to systems (and sub-systems), what differentiates each (e.g. functions, value-orientations, distributive principles, objectives) and the nature of their boundaries is far from apparent in the social exclusion literature. The notion that people are excluded when they become detached from the systems emanating from major social institutions is flagged by Berghman (1995, citing Poverty 3 researchers). It was proposed that exclusion resulted from the failure of one or more systems: the democratic and legal system (promoting civic integration); the labour market (promoting economic integration); the welfare state system (promoting social integration) and the family and community system (promoting interpersonal integration). Social exclusion thus becomes defined as "...a breakdown or malfunctioning of the major societal systems that should guarantee full citizenship" (1995, p20). It might follow that citizenship rights (social, political, cultural) are the key systems through which inclusion occurs (see Powell 1995, Marshall 1950). Yet, not all systems of attachment appear necessarily rights-based, or concerned principally with citizenship; in particular elements of economic interaction need to be accounted for. It could be surmised that each dimension or sphere (the terms appear to be used interchangeably) is comprised of institutions through which systems are operated. Yet, the underpinning 'organising principle' for each sphere remains unclear.

It may not just be a matter of how well systems are integrated within and across each other but, at a more abstract theoretical level, how spheres relate to each other. Discussing Polanyi's (1944) theory of 'embeddedness', Olofsson describes how in traditional pre-industrialist, pre-capitalist societies the economy was 'embedded':

"...economic institutions and behaviour do not exist within their own separate spheres, such as self-regulating markets...the everyday processes of production and distribution did not take place in distinct institutional forms. They took place within the traditional forms of kinship, neighbourhood, locality, religious and political affiliation. 'Economic' transactions were thus part of society's wider pattern of relationships" (1999, p42).

With the birth of liberal market society, the economy became 'disembedded', forming a separate sphere: "...economic aspects which were previously embedded were decoupled from their

earlier links to other social subsystems” (Olofsson 1999, p42). The social damage wrought by an unregulated (or supposedly self-regulating) market in turn provoked a series of protective structures and interventions. According to Olofsson “...a process is begun whereby the self-regulating system of markets becomes harnessed once again to other social concerns and institutions...” (1999, p43) leading to the re-embedding of the economy (Parsons 1971 makes a similar point – that differentiation is followed by inclusion). Objectives other than immediate profit come into play, such as the need to protect the earth from exhaustion, or protect society and its citizens from the consequences of economic downturn.

This signals the possibility of different configurations of spheres and that these are not static. However, it is unclear in this instance whether movement indicates that spheres have become better balanced, so that economic objectives are moderated by, even subordinated to, others, or whether a more sophisticated understanding of the conditions needed for profit has evolved. The dominant economic sphere somehow colonises others, re-engineering their objectives to become compatible with its own, thereby achieving better systems integration. This resonates with Walzer’s concerns about dominant spheres and goods (see chapter 2). Better integration may undermine social justice where it occurs through the inappropriate colonisation of one sphere by another.

Mouzelis (1999) describes the demise of ‘segmental localism’, less differentiated traditional communities, and the creation of “...broader, highly differentiated economic, political, social and cultural arenas” (1999, p191). Within each of these:

“...individuated subjects are constituted/ regulated/ empowered by such institutional complexes as the nation-state in the political sphere, national markets and/ or planning agencies in the economic, national systems of welfare and population surveillance/ management in the social, and mass literacy and nationalist ideologies in the cultural spheres” (1999, pp191, 192).

These days the nation state is able through communication technologies or infrastructure to “...penetrate the social periphery and to draw people into the centre in a way that was unthinkable in pre-industrial times” (Mouzelis 1999, p192). This suggests new ways in which communication mechanisms might serve to cross the boundaries of spheres and ‘embed’ one into the other (here political and social), and pose challenges to differentials in time-space reciprocity (Giddens 1984), the social distance between actors, as a basis for distinguishing

social from systems integration.

Parsons theorises society as "...analytically divisible into four *primary* sub-systems..." (1971, p10) each founded on a primary function, namely societal community (with the function of integrating the other three), pattern maintenance (latent pattern maintenance and tension management), polity ('goal attainment') and economy ('adaptation'). According to Mouzelis (1999), "...in modernity each of the four subsystems...portrays its own specific values/ norms and has its own logic and dynamic" (1999, p192). Thus, in the economic/ adaptive subsystem it is the logic of productivity and wealth maximisation that is paramount; in the political/ goal attainment subsystem it is resource mobilisation and the actualisation of collective goals via democracy; in the social/integration subsystem it is the logic of solidarity and in the cultural/ 'latent' subsystem it is value maintenance and commitment.

There is insufficient space here to begin to do justice to the complexities of Parson's theory, and much of it concerns questions beyond the scope of this thesis². What is useful to our purpose, though, is the notion that society can be divided into different arenas which can be differentiated by function, values/ norms, logics and dynamics. Parson's contention concerning the interface between social and personality systems is also of interest, given its implications for the 'attachment' of individuals to social systems:

"The integration of members into a society involves the zone of interpenetration between the social and personality systems. The relation is basically tripartite, however, because parts of the cultural system as well as parts of the social structure are internalized in personalities, and because parts of the cultural system are institutionalized in the society" (1971, p9)

This suggests that the dynamics between spheres and their systems at a macro-level, whether separate, inter-connected or subsumed, may find expression at micro-level. If, one sphere dominates others, then disadvantage in relation to that one may have wider repercussions. It may also point to linkages between forms of disadvantage and advantage, and the need for policy to take a holistic approach³.

There has been empirical investigation of connections between forms of disadvantage, inactivity or exclusion. Paugam's 'spiral of precariousness' revealed correlations between security of

employment, health, housing, education and partnership formation: “A strong correlation can be observed between precariousness of employment and the instability of partnerships” (1995, p52). Using the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS), Burchardt *et al.* (2002b) explored interconnections between consumption, production, political engagement, and social interaction (also Gordon *et al.* 2000). At a macro theoretical level, this could be represented as an exploration of interconnections between economic, political and social spheres.

Geographical areas

Arguably one of the contributions of social exclusion to the traditional concerns of poverty debates has been the recognition that not just individuals, groups and households experience deprivation, but whole neighbourhoods. In the USA, the possibility that neighbourhoods could be cut off from the mainstream, marked by their own (inferior) culture, values and behaviours – and populated by a preponderance of black people - was raised in the context of ‘underclass’ debates (Wilson 1987). This suggests that socio-cultural context at local, spatially-bounded, level can be more significant than that prevailing at national level. Areas, as well as people, can become detached from the mainstream for similar reasons: lack of access to education and opportunities and the infrastructure through which engagement occurs.

It is not just poor areas that can become segregated. Echoing Taylor’s concerns that the growth of inequality undermines conditions for democracy, Anderson (1999) contends that geographical segregation into the gated communities of the wealthy and the ghettos of the poor will eventually undermine the ‘spatial conditions’ for citizenship. ‘Exclusive localism’ undermines democracy and citizenship as “...democracy is based in part on mutuality and collective citizenship, with the structure of communities tying individuals together across their dissimilarities” (1999, p128). This is consistent with the idea that communities are based on shared characteristics, even if members have other characteristics that are not shared. Here geographical location is the common factor. It could also be argued that face-to-face contact, particularly if exposure is repeated or prolonged, enables shared characteristics to be identified and trust developed, even if difference is the initial focus.

The implications of geographical separation for the rich are very different to those for the poor. For the former, opportunities and networks are not confined to the ‘neighbourhoods’ they create.

According to Perri 6 (1997), disadvantaged people and their homogenous networks tend to be spatially concentrated, while the heterogeneous networks of the better off spread wider, tapping into resources beyond the confines of their spatially-defined local community. Furthermore, whether or not they reside in segregated communities, "...the rich and the poor live in *different spaces*; the space inhabited by the rich is global and virtual, the space of the poor is local and all-too-real for comfort" (Bauman 2000, p76).

Boundaries are delineated by more subtle means than brick walls. Neighbourhoods can effectively be 'cut off' by poor transport infrastructure and lack of access to intermediary institutions delivering public services, shops, factories and, consequently, employment opportunities. Access can also be regulated, people segregated or controlled, by 'interdictory spaces' designed to 'intercept, repel or filter would-be users.' (Flusty 1997). They may be physically inaccessible, time-consuming or hard to reach (what Flusty calls 'slippery space'); spaces may be 'uncomfortable', perhaps because they feel threatening ('prickly space'), or people occupying it may be monitored, e.g. through CCTV cameras ('jittery space').

Some have argued that 'spatial' considerations have become less significant definers of socio-cultural context due to "...the intensification of world-wide social relations which link distant realities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa" (Giddens 1990, p64). Through the development of IT and the common availability of television, alternative norms and values are conveyed to all, as are benchmarks for life-style comparisons. The impact on the higher and lower socio-economic classes may be very different, endorsing the superiority of the former and engendering unattainable aspirations in the latter. The internet enables 'virtual' communities to come into existence, founded on shared interests, rendering all other aspects of identity and usual indicators redundant or susceptible to deliberate misrepresentation (and thus misrecognition). Access to such technology is increasingly not the prerogative of the rich. The overall outcome is two realities:

"In sharp opposition to the virtual space of the Internet, the material space of the city is ruled by separation, segregation, isolation and breaks of communication. In that material space, each gesture of inclusion is accompanied by the act of exclusion" (Gray 2000, p32).

Morality and the 'underclass'

Exclusion as moral deviance

Moral deviance constitutes another possible cause of exclusion. It is linked by some to an 'underclass', the defining features of which are "...illegitimacy, violent crime, and drop-out from the labour force" (Murray 1996b, p25; also Field 1989). According to Murray, the arch-proponent of the concept and existence of an underclass, the welfare state is to blame for making (illegitimate) lone parenthood financially feasible, breaking women's financial dependency on men and hence removing civilising influences on their behaviour wrought by family responsibility. His stated concern is with children growing up in fatherless environments, where unemployment is the norm and crime common-place: "Children tend to behave like the adults around them" (1996b, p31). Moral values are culturally passed on, if not genetically inherited.

Murray draws an important distinction between 'the poor' and the 'underclass': "...the 'underclass' does not refer to degree of poverty, but to a type of poverty" (1996b, p23), or, perhaps more accurately, to a type of response to poverty. He asserts that the underclass is comprised of "...a certain type of poor person defined not by his condition...but by his deplorable behaviour in response to that condition..." (1996c, p82). Thus "...some long-term unemployed are members of the underclass, others...are unequivocally not. Some single mothers qualify; others do not, and so forth" (1996c, p82). It is not poverty, or even condition (e.g. lone parenthood) but the moral choices made by poor people which define the 'class'.

It is undisputed that social divisions in Britain are more pronounced than in the past, and that certain groups, such as lone mothers, are more likely to experience exclusion (Mann 1999). Whether attributable to structural causes, or to agency and moral choices, has been hotly contested: so too, if not always explicitly, have assumptions about how the former impacts upon the latter. The 'underclass' debate provides an extreme example of how diametrically opposed interpretations can be applied to empirical evidence, resulting in radically different policy prescriptions. It might also be taken to exemplify the kind of problem that can occur when understandings of exclusion developed in one socio-cultural context (here the USA) are transferred onto another (Britain). Certain aspects, particularly connections to race, do not travel well. However, given that there are home-grown British advocates of the 'underclass' too, it

might better be cast as a clash of ideologies within the same socio-cultural context.

Some objections to Murray's thesis are methodological - his over-dependence on anecdote and spurious use of statistics (Alcock 1996). Others concern weaknesses in his argument. Illegitimacy does not have to mean children are fatherless, neither is it just the prerogative of the lower social classes; most lone parents are divorced or separated; lone parents often remarry; it is poverty not lone parenthood that blights children's lives, etc. Here is not the place for an in-depth exploration. However, Murray's approach and critiques of it raise a number of themes relevant to this thesis.

Structure versus agency

According to Anderson (1999), the New Right's analysis is that the sub-systems of the market economy and the welfare state have become increasingly incompatible, with a negative impact on social integration. Crime, long-term welfare dependency/ unemployment and illegitimacy are portrayed as rational choices, when confronted with the perverse incentives provided by welfare institutions. The solution, therefore, is to remove welfare support and de-regulate, thereby re-establishing incentives for market integration. Like Murray, Field (1996) condemns welfare benefits as encouraging dependency and penalizing work, although he specifically holds the structure of means-tested benefits responsible rather than financial support *per se*. He condemns means testing as a corrupting influence, instead of the alleged pre-existing moral and other inadequacies of those receiving (and by implication exploiting) those benefits. It is the nature of the benefit system, not the fact of one that is regarded as problematic.

This might suggest that underclass theorists hold structures or systems responsible for the behaviours of (some) poor people. Yet, according to Mann, "Agency has provided the underclass theorists with their starting point..." (1999, p161). In general, there is a clear emphasis on the morals, behaviours and incapacity of individuals, rather than on structural explanations for exclusion:

"Murray's view is of an underclass made up of individuals with deplorable attitudes who lack foresight. The counter view sees the underclass as unlucky members of the working-class who have been made victims of economic circumstances" (Buckingham 1996, p171).

An emotionally charged debate ensues, promoting muddled, defensive thinking - with those favouring economic causes rejecting wholesale the existence of an 'underclass' and the role of agency. Yet, it is this reluctance to acknowledge poor people as moral and capable social actors which Mann (1999) claims has left the door open to the 'mischievous accounts' of underclass advocates. There are in fact distinct strands to the debate: it could be cast as a battle between advocates of different structural causes, i.e. the welfare state versus uncontained economic factors, or as the familiar structure versus agency debacle. At fault is the corrupting influence of the welfare state, failure to protect the vulnerable against the ravages of the free market, or the moral deviance of individuals. In all cases, there is a heavy moralising overtone.

There are echoes of themes from the discrimination literature. Murray resorts to disease analogies, describing the 'underclass' in terms of a 'cultural disease' with 'contaminating values' (1996). According to Lister "The language of disease and contamination associated with the 'underclass' conveys a pathological image of people in poverty" (1996b, p10). However, whereas underclass advocates see immoral exercise of agency as the cause of disadvantage, the medical model denies agency, and is unlikely to hold it responsible for disability. The former attribute individual action to a 'culture of poverty' and associated value-base, whereas the medical model accords no cultural dimension to disability. Policy prescriptions for tackling the 'underclass' thus tend to be overtly punitive, rather than the more subtle (if equally thorough) ceding of personal autonomy to professionals associated with the medical model.

It is not just behaviour that supposedly distinguishes members of the underclass from the 'deserving poor'. Some have argued that biological and genetic inadequacies also play a role. According to Walker "Early theories concerning social pathology were heavily influenced by eugenicists, with both official and independent studies being conducted into the inheritance of physical and mental defects" (1996, p67). Buckingham alleges that "Even when compared with the below average scoring working class, the underclass are significantly less intelligent" (1996, p172). Although Murray himself has not directly referred to this when expounding upon 'the underclass', Buckingham is not slow to spot that in the Bell Curve, Herrnstein and Murray assert that, "...although intelligence in itself cannot explain the explosion in illegitimacy, there is a direct and strong relationship between...low intelligence and the likelihood that the child will be born out of wedlock" (1994, p179 cited 1996, p173). However, Buckingham adds:

“The vast majority of the poor with little cognitive ability are still able to be admirable citizens because avoiding welfare dependence and staying married has much to do with personal qualities of self-restraint and the will to take personal responsibility for decisions. The problem comes when the benefit system removes the need for these values, thereby abolishing the need for moral fortitude” (1996, p173).

Ultimately, morals not intellectual capacity, are judged the deciding factor.

According to Anderson, the notion of an underclass has been used by the New Right to keep the middle-masses integrated, generating fear of ‘losing out’ and justifying “...a new class division’, entailing hostility and closure mechanisms, between the integrated middle masses and the excluded ‘underclass’” (1999, p136). If discriminatory attitudes can take the form of distancing through the demonisation of others (chapter 4), it seems that this could be used to define social boundaries and strengthen the cohesion between those included – and perhaps those excluded too – into discrete strata. Certainly, it can be seen as a device for explaining away the failures of an unregulated market by holding its victims responsible for their own predicament as it “...diverts our attention from blaming the mechanisms through which resources are distributed...” (Walker 1996, p73). Alternatively, it might be construed as indicating that the type of relationship with the state – the design of systems through which individual and state interact – is of critical importance. Mann (1999) advocates a new approach which both recognizes political and economic context, yet acknowledges the significance of the active human subject. Once again, we are edging towards an interactive approach.

Culture

According to Murray, the ‘dishonest poor’ are the product of a ‘culture of poverty’:

“Britain has a growing population of working-aged, healthy people who live in a different world from other Britons...and whose values are now contaminating the life of entire neighbourhoods...for neighbours who don’t share those values cannot isolate themselves” (1996b, p25).

Illegitimacy is indicative of inferior morals, while marriage is the mainstream, desirable social norm when siring or giving birth to a child. Murray also underlines the positive and important role played by stigma and blame in steering people away from undesirable behaviours.

The notion that poor people have different morals and values, that they inhabit a different culture to better-off people, has been roundly challenged by commentators, most directly by Seabrook: “the poor do not inhabit a *separate culture* from the rich...” (1988 cited in Bauman 2000, p76, Bauman’s emphasis). Some have argued that ‘deplorable behaviour’ is not the prerogative of the lowest socio-economic class. As Phillips suggests, with regard to illegitimacy and the (in her view) ‘social disaster’ represented by the ‘collapse of the intact family: “We are one society. These cultural developments run through it as a fault line from top to bottom” (1996, p159). Buckingham adds that “...recently, social scientists have begun to pin the blame for the growth of the underclass on a broader decline in morality and reduction in individual responsibility across the whole of society” (Buckingham 1996, p169).

The existence of separate values is unproven. Indeed there is no logical reason why divergent behaviours may not arise, where goals (whether for economic prosperity or a secure two-parent domestic environment) are shared but the extent of obstacles to fulfilling them is unequally distributed. These may be beyond the power of individuals to address, hence the scope for agency and choice is curtailed. People may reject the terms of inclusion not because they are oppressive but because they are unattainable.

Irrespective of the quality of the arguments, they signal the possibility that where cultural norms and values are not shared they may be destructively incompatible. Conversely, even if shared, it does not follow that this leads to cohesion, either because some do not have the resources required to conform to them or because they are innately oppositional. This poses the question of whether even shared cultural norms and values can be destructive, socially and/ or personally. Far from social justice demanding the recognition of *all* norms and values, on occasion it may require their rejection.

Social categorisation

It has been much debated whether ‘the underclass’ can be seen as a salient social category and, if so, on what shared characteristic it is based. Lister argues that populations of unemployed people, single-parents and people in poverty are unstable; the poor are not a single homogenous group who remain poor permanently. Yet as flagged in chapter 4, fluidity is a quality of many social categories, whether due to changing characteristics or context (queer theorists challenged

the salience of social categorization altogether). Whereas social categories are usually formed around what people are (defined by their physical characteristics), or what they have (categorized by socio-economic class), like 'performative' notions of identity, Murray's definition of the underclass centres on behaviour.

Social relations and relationships

Types of social relationship

Social exclusion has been defined as "...the result of a gradual breakdown of the social and symbolic bonds – economic, institutional, and individually significant – that normally tie the individual to society." (Xiberras 1993, cited in Silver 1994, pp533, 534; also Gore 1995; Room 1995b). At a macro level, social relations refer to the social positions and roles of different social categories and their inter-relation. At a micro level social relationships are the 'mechanisms for engagement' through which individuals are 'attached' to society. That is not to say social relationships only exist between actors operating at micro-level. Crucially, they include relationships between micro-level actors and institutions. Relationships can be variously framed - as can causes of and solutions to exclusion. Stewart (2000) suggests that, whatever their differences, conceptions of social exclusion have a common element, namely a concept of social relations. All this suggests it would be worthwhile to explore how they are constructed and if construction could be more robust and inclusive, what types there are and how they can differ.

According to Sen, the value of the concept of social exclusion lies not in its newness (he traces it back to Adam Smith), but instead "...in its practical influence in forcefully emphasizing – and focusing attention on – the role of relational features in deprivation" (2000, p8). Its meaning is specific to the failure of social relations, which may subsequently engender a wide range of deprivations, although deprivations occur for other reasons (e.g. natural disasters) and as an outcome of various, sometimes indirect, processes. The real value of an exclusionary perspective is thus "...conditional on the nature of the process that leads to deprivation" (2000, p12). Sometimes an analysis of the failure of social relations will illuminate the causes of deprivation, sometimes not. Social relationship failure can have 'constitutive' importance: "...not being able to relate to others and to take part in the life of the community can directly impoverish a person's

life” (2000, p13). However, it may be that relationship failure itself is not a major deprivation but has ‘instrumental’ importance, leading to major deprivations like income poverty. Being excluded from social relations can be a deprivation in its own right, as well as provoking other deprivations. It also signals that the outcome of one social relation can have implications for others. These may not be immediate: “The relationships in which a person is involved today may have implications for his or her capacity to manage relationships in subsequent phases of life” (Room 1999, p171).

Sen draws attention to ‘active’ and ‘passive’ exclusion (2000). Sometimes policy explicitly excludes a given group (e.g. on grounds of citizenship or ethnicity); sometimes deprivation is unintended, but nonetheless a consequence. It may also be that active exclusion has additional unforeseen consequences (presumably passive exclusion might too). Given that Sen sees in/exclusion as being about social relations, this has strong parallels with ‘direct’ and ‘indirect’ discrimination. However, the discrimination literature does not necessarily track consequences in this way, suggesting a potentially new perspective on types of discrimination.

Like Sen, Stewart (2000) attributes a central role to social relations. He frames them somewhat differently, identifying ‘contract’ and ‘compact’ as two fundamental types. The former is basically a market model, where inclusion is seen to depend on individual capacity rather than structural factors. ‘Contract’ relationships are in other respects impersonal, pragmatic and goal driven. In contrast, compacts are founded on mutuality and loyalty: “Compacts involve the recognition of social relationships of *interdependence* and *mutuality* and prioritise solidarity and collective empowerment” (Stewart 2000, p59, his emphasis). Unlike contracts, “The model does not require consensus on either purposes or means; rather its focus is upon collective empowerment through a shared participation in the determination of rights and obligations.” (Stewart 2000, p61). Solidarity means: “...a sense of fellow-feeling that extends beyond people with whom one is in personal contact” (Barry 2002, p23), or moral integration into a ‘moral community’ (Rodgers 1995b, p254). Membership may be critical (perhaps less so in contractual relations), but once accepted into membership, that is sufficient. This raises questions about whether both sorts of relationship can co-exist, and if so how. Miller (2001) might add that different types of relation also have different principles of justice (chapter 2). For him, relations based on solidarity are driven by need, ‘instrumental’ relations (meaning market-type or ‘contract’ relations, not instrumental as in Sen’s usage) by merit, and citizenship by equality –

suggesting another type of relationship.

We are still no nearer an understanding how social relationships are enacted and what is required to make them work. According to Sennett:

“At least three elements are necessary for people to practice social inclusion. There must be mutual exchange; the exchange must involve elements of ritual; and the ritual must generate witnesses who serve as judges of the behaviour of individuals” (2000, p279).

He contends that “...ritual is society’s strongest cement, its very chemistry of inclusion” (2000, p279). This is not an original claim. It can be traced back to Durkheim’s theory of ritual as “...stereotyped sequences of behaviour that have the capacity to arouse emotions and reinforce symbol and, hence, social structures; or...to generate new symbols and structures” (discussed in Turner 2002, p20). Thus ritual may be the key mechanism through which individuals are plugged into social structure and culture. Yet, much as they may oil the wheels of interaction, it could be argued that rituals can become devoid of meaning; repetition or familiarity dulls connections leading to emotional disengagement.

Other than ritual, forms of ‘cement’ holding relationships together include trust, or dependency accompanied by accountability (Sennett 2000). The social value of dependency is potentially controversial. Clearly, if unchosen, if unequal or not mutual, dependency can be a major source of conflict. Politically, the notion of ‘welfare-dependency’ is anathema, viewed as undermining the virtues of independence and self-responsibility: “...reformers tend to view durable and secure organization as debasing them into parasitic neediness” (Sennett 2000, p290). This is not necessarily to advocate isolation, but it proclaims a social justification for promoting, or failing to contain, economic instability. Yet independence must surely also pose significant questions about the ‘cement’ for social relationships.

Sennett highlights a ‘time dimension’ to relationships:

“...the exchanges which lie at the heart of social inclusion have a time dimension: they require duration in social relationship – not permanence, but sufficient time for unfolding, repeated interaction to give an experiential meaning to formal commitments.”(2000, p283).

If “...social bonds like trust take time to develop.” (2000, p283), this clearly poses logistical

challenges in the context of relationships between welfare providers and recipients.

Consistent with ‘compacts’ (Sennett 2000), another way to conceptualise the ‘operationalisation’ of social relations is as ‘membership’ governed by access criteria. For Gray, inclusion is closely associated with “...an ideal of common membership...” (2000, p23). Membership is required in order to participate, and all members should be able to participate fully. Yet he also acknowledges that: “In late modern societies marginal and hybrid subjects – people who belong in part to many forms of life but wholly to none – are common” (2000, p24). Presumably, this is inevitable, if some ‘forms of life’ are mutually exclusive, or membership of one group is contingent on exclusion from another. However membership is but the precursor to participation. This suggests a distinction between inclusion as notional and passive, and as active participation. Not only can exclusion be active or passive (Sen 2000), so too can inclusion.

Overall, this suggests a number of potential components to social relationships. Different types of social relation may have different objectives, and these may have implications for how they are enacted, the criteria for access and the sorts of ‘cement’ binding together institutions and actors. Unanswered questions remain about the mechanics or processes of such relations and what factors contribute to their formulation and operation. It is also unclear how relations are sited within spheres. This is pursued in section 2 of this thesis.

Prioritised relationships

Within the literature, and in different historical, cultural and political contexts, particular types of relationship are identified as key, not just in terms of their ‘constitutive’, but their ‘instrumental’ importance – perhaps reflecting whichever sphere is dominant. Sometimes relationships with the state take precedence, sometimes relationship within the market economy, particularly the labour market. Indeed, it could be argued that there has been a shift in social exclusion discourse, away from relations with the state and state welfare systems and towards employment status. ‘Worker’ rather than ‘citizen’ becomes the badge of inclusion.

Citizenship Rights

Early French usage of the term ‘social exclusion’ referred specifically to groups excluded from

social insurance coverage. Socially excluded in effect could simply mean the opposite of socially insured. As such, it is a narrow concept, specific to the coverage of state-run social insurance protection (much eroded in the UK). However, if taken to have a wider meaning of exclusion from society, it might imply that protection from disadvantage comes only or mostly from the state and that such protection takes the form of social insurance. It might further imply that the relationship of individuals to 'society' is via the state, or that other social relationships are contingent on that relationship. Perhaps in that society at that time, this was so. However, it is far from inevitable.

Social rights grant access to statutory provision of education and health-care as well as benefits. It is possible, therefore, to understand inclusion in terms of inclusion in public services: "What justifies universal public services are the human needs they meet and the role these services have in cementing a common life" (Gray 2000, p28). Other institutions, notably the market, offer alternatives for the better-off, hence concerns about them opting out of public services. However, citizenship rights are comprised of more than social rights, encompassing civil and political rights. Perhaps social rights are less well-placed to 'cement' together socio-economic classes than civil and political rights. Yet, if economic advantage also renders those superfluous, i.e. brings civil and political advantages too, not only is a 'dominant' good enabling inappropriate acquisition, thereby compounding inequality (Walzer 1983), so too is social cohesion eroded.

This conceptualization of citizenship rights clearly reflects Marshall's seminal work (1950) on the 'three-legged stool' of civil, political and social rights. It also suggests that rights are important mechanisms for relationships in different spheres. Within what Gore refers to as a 'Marshallian framework', "...social exclusion can be seen as *incomplete citizenship*, which is due to deficiencies in the possession of citizenship rights..." (1995, p19). However, people may be excluded even if they do have citizenship rights. Rights can grant access, but cannot guarantee outcomes. Furthermore, if rights are too complex people will fail to exercise them. If rights-based services are inappropriate, or delivered in stigmatizing ways, rights may not be exercised, even though needs exist. People may have political rights to vote, but low turn-outs suggest it takes more to make democracy meaningful. Perhaps because their history and culture differs profoundly to those of the majority, people can cease to identify with, have confidence in, or engage with democratic processes and outcomes (Taylor 2000). Other explanations would

include lack of meaningful choice, or lack of confidence in the efficacy of any party to achieve positive change.

If people can be included without having to rely on citizenship rights, or excluded even if they have them, rights may not be the only (or best) way to structure systems linking micro-level actors to meso or macro-level structures, or of promoting social cohesion across groups of actors

Employment

Other than through social security benefits (or private sector insurance), inherited wealth or the sharing of income within households, paid employment is clearly the primary means of accessing income. As such it is likely to be the key route out of poverty. In a society where the goals are to reduce public spending and/ or dependence on benefits, to minimise centralised funding of public services while maximising the usage of them, costs are transferred to individuals (e.g. tuition fees for higher education). Clearly access to cash up-front becomes more critical, as it increasingly becomes the only gateway to other things, hence so too does paid employment.

It would be mistaken to see long-term unemployment purely in terms of having no access to earned income and resulting deprivations. Its (instrumental) ramifications are considerable (see Sen 2000). For the individual these include the loss of skills, psychological harm, ill-health, loss of motivation, the compromising of future work opportunities, and disruption of family relations. For society, there is a waste of productivity and loss of output; there may be heightened ethnic tensions and gender divisions, a weakening of social values as social arrangements are perceived unfair, and associated increases in crime. Paid employment is therefore not just the route out of poverty but the route to social inclusion. It is therefore unsurprising that, for some, employment has become equated with social inclusion. To be in employment is to be socially included; to be unemployed means social exclusion.

Criticisms have been made of this line of argument. Sticking resolutely to a citizenship model, Lister argues that although “The employment-based model of social inclusion privileges paid work as *the* citizenship obligation” (2000, p48), there are numerous other ways in which active citizenship might be expressed, such as through community and voluntary work, bringing up

children, etc. These too have both social and economic value (Levitas 1998). Echoing issues raised in chapter 4, a narrow focus on paid work can pose particular problems for women with caring responsibilities, ethnic minorities and disabled people (Bagilhole 2002) – although many may be able to work with the right support and adjustments to the work environment. Even where people are able to work, it can bring personal costs if terms of inclusion are too narrow: “...the goal of an inclusionary employment policy cannot merely be to get the maximum number of people into paid work. It must address their need to reconcile work with family and personal life.” (Gray 2000, p27). Wolfe suggests that “the policy goal of “full employment” might give way to a conception of “meaningful activity for all” (1995, p97; see also Mouzelis 1999). Moreover, if globalization means that national governments can exert less control over job creation, it seems sensible to promote other forms of inclusion.

Irrespective of the range of other socially valuable activities that contribute to inclusion, it is clear that inclusion via the labour market requires more than merely having a paid job. Open unemployment may be one expression of exclusion; precarious employment (Gore 1995; Paugam 1995) and low wages may be others. Low pay means employment may not be a route out of poverty and related exclusion. If inclusion is understood in terms of social relations or stability, it is not assisted by “...the policy of deliberate ‘precarization’ conducted by the operators of labour markets...” resulting in the “...falling apart and decomposing of human bonds, communities and partnerships” (Bauman 2000, p78). Flexible work-places are not viable communities and “Both authority and fraternity wither when the onus of survival shifts to individuals” (Sennett 2000, p289). The predominant social relationship of the workplace is purely contractual in nature – the antithesis of solidarity: “Bonds and partnerships are viewed...as things to be *consumed*, not produced; they are subject to the same criteria of evaluation as all other objects of consumption” (Bauman 2000, p78).

Thus it seems that neither citizenship rights nor paid work are synonymous with inclusion. The latter can even be viewed as counterproductive under certain conditions. Both raise distinctions between technical and actual inclusion, while a narrow focus on paid work also narrows the gateway to inclusion.

Qualities and degrees of inclusion

Undesirable inclusion

Discussion of inclusion as citizenship rights or paid employment indicated that the boundary separating inclusion from exclusion is more subtle than may be assumed.

According to Silver, during the 1970s the French Left began to distinguish between objective and subjective exclusion, with the latter referring to "...alienation and the loss of personal autonomy under advanced capitalism...Exclusion meant being treated as an object..." (1994, p532). This suggests that autonomy is a necessary part of inclusion in a meaningful sense. Another possibility is that people are counted as members, that membership is meaningful to them, but they are unable to enact membership. For example, a disabled person may 'count' as a citizen but, because of how society is structured, environmental and attitudinal factors, is unable to express citizenship. In addition, people may have access to some institutions and relationships but not others; they may be included in social relationships which are not valued, are disapproved of, even criminalized.

If possible to be objectively included yet subjectively feel excluded, to be technically included and still experience significant disadvantage, the desirability of inclusion becomes questionable. As Gore observes, with reference to thinking in the 1970s about the way individuals and communities had been incorporated into the broader economy and society, "...what was problematic was their *terms of incorporation*" (1995, p5, his emphasis). Sen refers to 'unfavourable inclusion', such as exploitative conditions of employment: "...many problems of deprivation arise from unfavourable terms of inclusion and adverse participation, rather than what can be sensibly seen primarily as a case of exclusion as such" (2000, p28). As he observes, being 'kept out' and being included on unfavourable terms are different problems.

While cautioning against accepting too readily that apparently chosen self exclusion is in fact voluntary, Barry (2002) queries whether social exclusion must always be seen as a 'bad thing'. If terms of inclusion are oppressive it may be better to be excluded. A concern with what might be termed unsatisfactory terms of inclusion was apparent in the affirmative model of disability (chapter 4), which highlights the positive advantages to life outside the mainstream. Meanwhile

queer theory appeared to reject any terms of inclusion as inherently limiting. This underlines the importance of diversity being included on terms which preserve, even enhance, autonomy, removing unnecessary limitations and oppression – and the need to define ‘unnecessary’ in this context.

Social cohesion

It is commonly assumed in social exclusion discourse that social inclusion automatically engenders ‘social cohesion’: “An inclusive society is a cohesive society” (Gray 2000, p23). Yet, very different actions may be justified in the name of promoting inclusion and cohesion. The pitfalls, tensions and dynamics set in train by different approaches require further exploration to identify which is likely to be most effective in maximising the inclusion of diversity without jeopardising the integrity of the whole.

According to Gray, ‘weakly’ defined social cohesion: “...encompasses a general consensus on basic values, a lack of widespread alienation and anomie and an absence of marginalized and disaffected social groups” (2000, p25). Yet, “Cohesive societies may be repressive. They may achieve stability by practices of subordination and hierarchy...”, thus, if inclusion is enforced rather than voluntary, cohesion depends on society’s ability to repress dissent or oppress difference: “Such societies remain cohesive by disabling individual autonomy” (Gray 2000, p25). It does not follow that what purports to be an inclusive society will also necessarily be cohesive. Its overall integrity may be weakened by internal pressures generated by the oppression required to ‘reshape’ individuals to conform with a narrowly drawn norm (see chapter 4).

The meanings of ‘inclusion’ and ‘integration’ and distinctions between them are not always clear. As a basic premise, it can be argued that the *inclusion* of incompatible diversity will have implications for *integration*, i.e. to attempt to accommodate irreconcilable, unavoidable, mutually exclusive differences must compromise the integration or cohesion of a structure, as it struggles to contain ensuing pressures towards fragmentation. Sometimes, though, the terms are used to denote degree of enforced conformity: “Integration is something which is imposed/facilitated from without...” (Ratcliffe 2000, p171). It may imply a closer connection – being part of a club rather than merely on its mailing list. However, it is not obvious that close connections

can only be achieved through enforced adherence to a homogenous norm (or, indeed, that close connections are desirable). This would be to assume that conflict cannot be resolved or differences negotiated. To maximise the inclusion of diversity, strategies to manage diversity and diffuse conflict will be of critical importance. According to Mortenson (1999), the opposite of integration is not differentiation (as traditionally thought) but disintegration - an important conceptual distinction that allows for the possibility that integration can accommodate diversity without differentiation necessarily occurring. Integration does not have to hinge on conformity.

There may be social and personal costs to inclusion. As discussed, enforced conformity with a narrow homogenous norm may compromise cohesion. There may be resource implications, if 'unproductive' people are accorded membership. Personal costs may take the form of loss of autonomy, the need to compromise or be tolerant of others. How time is spent, the activities undertaken or company kept may not be what an individual would choose. There therefore need to be reasons why individuals should choose to engage with society - and why society should permit or encourage inclusion. There may also be good (as in theoretically inevitable) reasons why an individual or behaviour cannot, or should not, be included. Their inclusion might compromise rather than enrich the integrity of the whole, because two alternatives must be confronted and are mutually incompatible. It may be impossible because a good required for inclusion is logically scarce (chapter 2).

Conversely, there may be positive advantages to what is negatively portrayed as oppression/repression. Some firmness of boundaries and expectations are necessary to provide social and personal security, and this is necessary for social cohesion: "If security without freedom feels like repulsive oppression, freedom without security prompts one to dream of oppression as the miraculous cure for the pains of vulnerability" (Bauman 2000 p86).

The underlying tenet seems to be that social cohesion depends on social stability, whether by fair means or foul, negotiation of differences or their oppression. Yet, either way, stability may be unattainable: "...the day-to-day workings of deregulated world markets impose a degree of economic insecurity on all countries exposed to them that is inimical to cohesion and, therefore, to inclusion" (Gray 2000, p34). In such circumstances "...social cohesion cannot mean stabilizing the positions of people in an immobile or stationary condition of society. It can only refer to a particular way of coping with change" (Gray 2000, p25). A further possibility is that

instability is deliberately created:

“...Once the basic cause of poverty is removed (absolute dearth of resources) this must be replaced by the development of an artificially created and subjective sense of insufficiency, for nothing could be more menacing to industrial society than that people should declare themselves satisfied with what they have...” (Seabrook 1988, cited in Bauman 2000, p75).

The incapacity of rigidly oppressive societies to absorb ever-changing pressures generated both internally and externally, deliberately or otherwise, suggests that looser, more fluid forms of attachment may be desirable, if the social cohesion of a diverse, mobile populace is to be sustained.

Frameworks and paradigms

As in the discrimination literature there have been attempts to pull together strands of thought into more comprehensive frameworks. Burchardt *et al.* (2002a) probably go furthest. They identify a set of aims for a framework, including that it should combine the most relevant causes of exclusion clearly and simply, recognise interactions, facilitate dynamic analysis, apply at individual and community level and to societies at different stages of development. They then describe what they term an ‘integrated approach’, portrayed as a cross-section of onion rings, with the individual at the core, and ever larger rings representing family, community, local, national and global levels. It is proposed that these levels interact and influence each other. They identify human, physical and financial capital as three types of (potentially inter-related) capital that individuals or communities may have, calling these ‘past influences’. These are filtered through external and internal influences, broadly, choices and constraints, or ‘present influences’. These impact on each ‘onion ring’, leading to outcomes at different levels which, in turn, create new influences. It is a brave attempt which may benefit from further explanation than they provide. However, the mechanisms through which all this occurs are not discussed.

Silver (1994) has traced the implications of different social theories for understandings of inclusion and exclusion in her development of ‘three paradigms’. The ‘solidarity paradigm’, founded on French Republican tradition, centres on the social bond between individuals and

society expressed as “a national consensus, collective conscience, or general will” (Silver 1994, p541). Exclusion is “...inherent in the solidarity of nation, race, ethnicity, locality and other cultural or primordial ties...” (Silver 1994, p542). The ‘specialisation paradigm’, emanating from Anglo-American liberalism, starts from the premise that the difference in individuals gives rise to specialisation and differentiation. Integration occurs through exchange, both networks of voluntary exchanges between autonomous individuals and contractual exchange of rights and obligations. Social structures are specialised, comprised of separate, competing social spheres. Exclusion arises from “...an inadequate separation of social spheres, from the application of rules inappropriate to a given sphere, or from barriers to free movement and exchange between spheres” (1994, pp542,543; also Walzer 1983). It can take the form of discrimination: “...the inappropriate exercise of personal tastes or the enforcement of group boundaries that individuals are not free to cross...” (Silver 1994; p556). Finally, the ‘monopoly paradigm’, concerning the formation of group monopolies over scarce resources, is based on social democratic notions of citizenship and is inherently conflictual (Gore 1995). It sees the social order as coercive, “...imposed through a set of hierarchical power relations” (1994, p543). Monopoly “...creates a bond of common interest...” (Silver 1994, p543) among insiders. Exclusion occurs where ‘closure’ is exerted to preserve and maximise advantage.

Others have taken a similar approach. According to Room, the liberal vision giving rise to the Anglo-Saxon approach to poverty was of society as “...a mass of atomized individuals engaged in competition within the market place” (1995a, p6). The task for social policy was therefore to equip individuals with the resources to survive in that competitive arena. In contrast, in the continental tradition, which spawned notions of social exclusion, society was seen by intellectual and political elites as “...a status hierarchy or as a number of collectives, bound together by sets of mutual rights and obligations that are rooted in some broader moral order” (Room 1995a, p6). In this scenario, the challenge for inclusion is to find ways of re-attaching individuals who have become detached from the moral order, presumably through strengthening the bonds of rights and obligations.

Levitas (1998) identifies three discourses of social exclusion. ‘RED’ is a redistributionist discourse, closely intertwined with approaches to poverty. ‘SID’, a social integrationist discourse, sees inclusion primarily (though not exclusively) in terms of attachment to the labour market. It is drawn from the same origins as Silver’s solidarity paradigm: “Exclusion is

understood as the breakdown of structural, cultural and moral ties which bind the individual to society” (1998, p21). Finally, ‘MUD’ is characterised as a ‘moral underclass’ discourse. Levitas observes that all three posit paid work as a major factor in social integration, and all three have a moral content.

Whatever justifiable criticisms might be made concerning the coherence and distinctiveness of each paradigm or discourse, such approaches helpfully begin to identify potential components of a framework for inclusion and exclusion. Each articulates, with varying degrees of clarity, a concept of society, its structures and social order, approach to citizenship, basis for integration, implications for morality and understanding of exclusion. The policy implications of each also differ. For example, for those adhering to a solidarity paradigm the challenge is to ‘insert’ excluded people into the dominant moral culture (which may be adjusted as a consequence); discrimination (specialization) is impeded by market competition and state protection of individual rights, while monopolies can be tackled through opening up membership to outsiders, e.g. through citizenship rights. A further question is the extent to which paradigms (or discourses) can co-exist, notwithstanding their obvious differences. It is noticeable that Silver’s three paradigms are combined in Robert Walker’s definition of society as:

“...a status hierarchy [*monopoly paradigm*] comprising people bound together by rights and obligations [*specialisation paradigm*] that reflect, and are defined with respect to, a shared moral order [*solidarity paradigm*]” (1995; p103).

This suggests that all three paradigms, and different types of associated social relationships, can co-exist.

Conclusion

It can safely be concluded that the meaning of social exclusion is marked by extreme confusion and complexity. It is as if all the themes previously covered, along with some new ones, have been thrown in the air and left wherever they land. Social exclusion discourses do not converge around any clearly identifiable common focus or set of tasks. This is perhaps because authors are concerned (not always explicitly) with exclusion from different things: societal dimensions; public services; the approved moral code; the labour market or the market in general;

citizenship, or social relationships. Exclusion is attributed to state failure, economic failure or personal failure. Policy implications are contradictory. The benefit system should be strengthened, restructured or cut back; unemployed people should be protected from, or pressurised into, engagement with the market. Of course, each may have some bearing on the others, but quite how they inter-relate remains largely unarticulated. Even where connections are made, as with Murray's 'underclass', they are not necessarily cogently argued.

A number of well-rehearsed arguments are discernible as sub-text – for and against state-enforced redistribution, whether the state or the market should take precedence and the extent to which the former should constrain or liberate the latter, whether disadvantage is a structural outcome or attributable to individual agency, and the relationship between the two. A pro/ anti-capitalism debate is a key undercurrent. Whether featuring in arguments for or against, concepts of capitalism are generally unelaborated - and sometimes crude to the point of caricature. It is unsurprising, therefore, that discussions of exclusion in relation to capitalism are often similarly unsophisticated. Taken together, the fact that social inclusion can encompass directly oppositional ideologies and views of human nature explains why the term is so heavily contested - and so politically useful.

If social exclusion simply represents a refocusing of poverty debates, away from income and onto more diverse indicators, it is little more than a shift of focus within familiar parameters. There is engagement with discrimination issues, but often at a somewhat superficial level. Poverty literature frequently observes that people with particular characteristics are likely to be disproportionately poor. Now they are observed to be disproportionately excluded. Even where the same themes are tackled, such as the balance between structure and agency, there appears no acknowledgement of the wealth of theoretical material to be found in the discrimination literature (although issues of social categorization surface to some extent in 'underclass' debates). Meanwhile, the discrimination literature appears not fully to have digested the implications of theory around the nature of society to be found in the literature on social integration.

Both major themes from the social justice literature are evident. Concerns around distributive justice flow from an approach to social exclusion rooted in poverty debates. Proponents of the 'underclass' attempt to create a new stigmatized social category, where long-term

unemployment, lone parenthood, residence in deprived neighbourhoods (and 'race' in the USA) become indicators of cultural inferiority and threat. Debates on whether or not the 'underclass' share mainstream cultural values and aspirations could be construed as a battle over cultural recognition.

One of the claims made about social exclusion's distinctiveness resides in its focus on process. It is true that an appreciation of time as a factor has emerged, partially driven by new longitudinal datasets. These have enabled combinations of 'vertical' (sequentially over time) and 'horizontal' patterns (clusters occurring at the same time) to be tracked empirically. They permit correlations between early disadvantage and later outcomes and between different forms of disadvantage. Illuminating though this certainly is, it amounts to stringing together outcomes in an attempt to understand their inter-relationships. Beyond this, it does not reveal or theorise in any depth the nature of underlying processes.

Whatever its inadequacies, internal disparities, and similarities to existing concepts, the concept of social exclusion does have something new to contribute. Most notably, through its primary focus on 'belonging' and participation rather than living standards, it allows for the possibility that participation - or inclusion - may be prevented by factors unconnected to material disadvantage, no matter how multi-dimensionally described. As a positive counter-side to its lack of focus it provides an arena within which there is potential to encompass poverty *and* discrimination, distribution *and* cultural recognition, structure *and* agency, and to facilitate the exploration of interconnections. This is not to say that de facto it has to be unfocused and contradictory. Instead it indicates the need to explore much more methodically than has so far occurred how these factors come together. Another allegedly distinctive feature of social exclusion may provide a vehicle for this. Various authors posit social relations and relationships as the key to ex/ inclusion. Some have gone further to identify different types of relationship, connecting them with different types of society, objectives or forms of interchange. Yet, how social relationships operate and their connection to processes remains unexplored.

We do, though, have indications about the components of society which need to be connected if social cohesion is to be achieved. Firstly there is the question of how systems (and sub-systems) fit together, whether they do so coherently or not, and the balance between different spheres. Secondly there are issues about how different strata of actors inter-relate. Thirdly, it is a matter

of how systems impact on actors and vice versa; how macro or meso-level institutions and micro-level actors interact. The latter issue is potentially particularly significant, if the way in which processes are structured and enacted can create social structure and mould individual identities. Similarly, depending on how connections occur, micro-level actors may be enabled to, or prevented from, influencing the policies and practices of macro or meso-level institutions. To focus on social relations fits well with a conceptualisation of mainstream society as a shifting mass of networks and less well with 'society' as a fixed, homogenous, bounded mainstream, including a majority and excluding a minority. The more interconnected the networks, the greater will be social cohesion. The greater the diversity within society, the more complex the interconnections between networks may be.

This conclusion reinforces those of preceding chapters that a more thorough investigation of process is now required. Chapter 2 on social justice indicated the need to understand how misrecognition could intervene in the framing and enactment of distributive relationships. It also pointed to the importance of accurate recognition of the defining qualities of the 'good' and that these should be reflected in access criteria. Chapter 3 on poverty similarly highlighted the need for a better understanding of processes, building on Sen's capability theory. Chapter 4 on discrimination drew attention to discrimination and oppression as features of processes, and that the processes through which individuals and different 'levels' of society and its institutions interact remain ill-defined. Cultural understandings, the valuing and usage of 'indicators', could present significant barriers to recognition. Finally, this chapter has begun consideration of the nature of processes and social relationships linking societal levels and actors.

Processes and associated social relations emerge as the common denominator. Each chapter has something to contribute towards understanding them, setting a clear direction for investigations.

¹ Giddens distinguishes different types of rules. Here the type of rules intended anticipate and explicitly direct action.

² For example, Parsons has a particular interest in accounting for the advance of capitalism and the evolution of societies.

³ This was recognized by the New Labour government when it established the Social Exclusion Unit to work across government.

Section 2

Developing a Theoretical Framework

Introduction to section 2

The first section of this thesis ranged from macro-level considerations about the conceptualisation of society (chapter 5) to micro-level matters around identity (chapter 4). Throughout, the importance of process was stressed, and of welfare provision, suggesting a focus on the processes operationalised by meso-level welfare institutions. For the inclusion of diversity to be maximised, all three levels need to be considered. This was expressed most eloquently by literature discussed in chapter 4, which pinpointed three possible sites for intervention or 'adjustment': the socio-cultural context or environment, individuals, and the systems and processes connecting them.

Firstly it is necessary to clarify what inclusion is into. We have seen that the nature of socio-cultural context is a critical determinant of the nature of inclusion and exclusion. Our concern is with inclusion into 'the mainstream' – a term which can apply at different levels, to society, culture, institutions, services or programmes - and to what extent it can include 'diversity', of objectives, cultural values, social categories and aspects of identity.

In outline, the proposal to be explored in the following chapters, and around which they are structured, is that society can be conceptualised as comprised of spheres or dimensions, associated macro-level objectives, and levels ranging from supranational down to household and individual. Institutions exist at all spheres and levels, and it is through these that processes are carried out in order to operationalise macro-level objectives. Processes can span spheres and levels. They are enacted through networks of social relationships between differently placed actors, each with their own objectives and constraints. Cultural norms and values steer actions, explicitly or implicitly, in all cases.

Chapters in section 1 drew attention to the different levels at which theory can operate, from deep, abstract notions of society and 'ideal-types', to 'middle-range' theory, to theory which can be directly applied to policy. This section begins by setting out a theory of the first sort and thence progresses upwards to the policy surface. It aims to demonstrate coherence between theoretical levels, and enable the journey from theory to policy to be discerned. Although not claimed that levels of theory can be neatly transposed onto societal levels, chapters 6, 7 and 8 consider macro, meso and micro levels respectively. Chapter 6 considers from a macro-level perspective how mainstream society can be conceptualised and

configured if the inclusion of diversity is to be maximised. Chapter 7 moves to a meso-level to theorise distributive processes. Chapter 8 considers micro-level issues around the formation of identity, transactional needs and the enactment of social relationships. Finally, chapter 9 considers the practical implications for policy.

Chapter 6: A Macro-level View – Structures, Processes and Relationships

Introduction

It is empirically obvious that societies differ in their norms, values and ‘customary activities’. Historically, they have grown from different religious roots and been governed according to different ideologies and objectives. They have differing degrees and distributions of power and resources and different criteria for distributions. Expectations vary about roles, life-styles and opportunities, what goods are acceptable or desirable, what constitutes justice and how to enforce it. There may be variations vertically between societal levels and horizontally between communities at each level. The socio-cultural context may, therefore, vary considerably within and between societies, societal levels, institutions and communities. It may evolve over time, perhaps consequent on exposure to alternatives and the dynamics generated. The challenge is to find a framework of generic features of society and their implications for inclusion, against which variation can be gauged and through which an ideal model of features most conducive to the inclusion of diversity can be developed.

A social framework

Discussion in chapter 5 highlighted various potential components to the social context and that this can be conceptualised in various ways. They include spheres or dimensions, levels (from supra-national down to individual), institutions, cultural norms, systems, processes and relationships. Particular goods and/ or types of relationship were shown as key to inclusion. There were examples of frameworks that incorporated certain components, categorised types of society, relationships or concepts of inclusion. However, nowhere were these all pulled together into a coherent framework. In particular, it remains unresolved how components that denote structure (e.g. spheres, levels, institutions) ‘fit’ with process; how (and if) one emerges from or forms the other. Moreover, despite a strong emphasis on social relationships as mechanisms for attachment, there is little if any reference made to the considerable literature on network analysis.

Spheres

The importance of being included in all spheres is a familiar theme in social exclusion literature. However, quite what a sphere is remained inconclusive. The following draws on themes covered in chapter 5 in an attempt to construct a socio-cultural framework 'fit for purpose'. In particular, it makes use of themes from Talcott Parson's work (and Mouzelis' discussion of it) albeit in different ways and to different ends than his.

It is proposed to take macro-level societal objectives as a starting point. To formulate and operationalise such objectives requires institutions and processes. Macro-level objectives, and all ensuing from them, can be grouped under broad headings of economic, social, political and so on. Each is underpinned by a value-base and norms and each generates, or is fuelled by, certain dynamics. Thus each sphere can be envisaged as embedded in structures, institutions, and processes. Together, these can be understood as the components of a sphere or 'sub-system' of operation.

Society can be understood as a configuration of spheres. Many configurations are possible because spheres can dominate, subsume, interconnect with, or stand separate from, each other. Configurations are not static and can shift, e.g. as one sphere 'colonises' another, re-engineering its objectives and values to support its own.

Defining 'ideal-type' objectives, values and drivers

Drawing on the 'logics' flagged by Mouzelis, wealth creation or the maximisation of profit might be construed as 'ideal-type' economic objectives. The value-base is literally and pragmatically represented by material worth, and individuals are valued according to how necessary their skills and knowledge are to creating wealth - and how scarce. Inequalities are understood as outcomes of individual capacity, agency and effort. Scarcity, inequality, competition and aspiration for what is not possessed are the principal (and interconnected) drivers.

In contrast (perhaps antithesis) social objectives might be characterized as concerned with maximising the integration of individuals through solidarity. The value-base prioritises the well-being and support of others (though whether this implies their empowerment remains to be debated), while the value of all people (or all members) is presupposed to be equal and is

unjudged. Inequalities are understood as caused by structural factors and discriminatory processes rather than reflecting individual qualities. Drivers are towards reducing manifestations of inequality and collaboration, rather than competition, pointing to collective instead of individualistic solutions.

An 'ideal-type' political objective might be construed as the instigation of action or resource mobilization towards a goal. This leaves open the purpose to which action and resources might be devoted. The precise expression of political objectives seem innately likely to be complex (at least from a Western cultural perspective), as considerable variation is possible in political ideology. Moreover, in view of the differing forms that power can take (Lukes 1993), action/ resource mobilisation might be achieved by persuasion or compulsion; by the overt or covert withholding of alternatives. It might also build on adherence to other objectives, appealing to the desire for personal economic gain, collective solidarity or particular cultural/ religious beliefs, and their associated value-bases. In its own right, power is valuable in achieving an 'ideal-type' political objective, and hence is integral to the value-base, expressed in terms of the skills with which to manage, manipulate or coerce disparate interests, views and values and orientate them all towards the desired direction. Dynamics may be competitive where alternatives are generated, whereupon they strive towards overcoming or negating alternatives. There may also be drivers towards building unity, increasing proximity among some through distancing, perhaps demonising, others.

Even more problematic (again, from a Western perspective) is the precise expression of cultural objectives, if an 'ideal-type' cultural objective is taken to concern the building of commitment to a particular belief-set, values and behavioural code. In the context of immense scope for variety, there are two major distinctions; between cultures explicitly based on religious doctrine and those which are secular. In the case of the former, cultural objectives will be embedded in religious institutions, while the latter has no such clear-cut 'objectified' basis. In either case, though, culture may permeate all institutions of all spheres. To attempt to tackle cultural objectives in generic terms, it could be argued that the goal, as with political objectives, is to induce particular behaviours by overt or covert means. Cultural objectives may also be associated with social objectives, creating solidarity between members (those who comply with the required doctrine). Yet they could support economic objectives, in a culture built on individualism and the goal of profit. In generic terms, the driver is conformity (what Parsons terms 'pattern maintenance'); including undeclared but nonetheless highly coercive pressures generated by wider social attitudes and behaviours. It

does not follow that beliefs, values and behaviours must be narrowly defined; they could be predicated on valuing diversity.

It is useful to distinguish one further 'sphere' which underpins, reflects, or sets parameters for other objectives, subject to the precise form they take, which dominates and whether others are understood as contradictory, supportive or subsumed. The objectives of what can be termed the 'civil sphere' concern understandings of justice; what is deemed an appropriate balancing and distribution of freedoms and constraints, rights and obligations. Traditionally segmented into civil, political and social (Marshall 1950), rights can apply to institutions in different spheres, built around different macro-level objectives. However, it is proposed (for reasons which will hopefully become apparent) that rights and obligations should all fall under the heading of 'civil' mechanisms. All are devices for defining the space available for individual autonomy, whether preventing action that would encroach upon it (negative rights) or necessitating action to promote its fulfilment (positive rights).

In generic terms, civil objectives uphold the order required by whatever socio-cultural configuration of objectives prevails, with justice understood in relation to that paradigm. Conformity is valued but, bearing in mind that the space in which individuals have freedom to do as they please may be significant, this might be better expressed as non-transgression of whatever constraints apply. Dynamics emanate from the point of division between 'right' and 'wrong'. The more intolerant the society, the more tightly drawn will be the distinction. This may not only apply to cultures which are intolerant of including diversity. It could also be expressed as intolerance of intolerance.

This can be summarized in tabular form:

Table 1: 'Ideal-type' objectives, value-bases and drivers

Sphere:	Objective:	Value-base:	Drivers:
Economic	Wealth maximization/ Profit	Material worth, profit Skills/ Knowledge required to create wealth The power of agency Efficiency	Scarcity Inequality Aspiration Competition Individualisation Innovation
Social	Integration though solidarity	Well-being Support of others All people/ members have equal value The power of structures	Equality Collaboration Collective solutions Standardisation
Political	Resource mobilization - the instigation of action towards a goal	Power Negotiation skills, ability to orientate others	The overcoming, diffusing or negation of competing alternatives Uniting supporters, and distancing others
Cultural	Commitment to beliefs, values, behavioural code – the induction of certain behaviours	Enshrined in religious doctrine OR as per dominant secular societal objectives	Conformity 'Pattern maintenance'
Civil	Uphold the approved order and associated notion of justice	Non-transgression of constraints	Clear-cut distinction between 'right' and 'wrong'

Although possible to distinguish distinct 'ideal-type' objectives and value-bases for each sphere, their expression and operation is likely to be less clear-cut. In the somewhat abstract terms set out above, there is no intrinsic conflict. Indeed, each could be seen as necessary to support the other. To varying degrees, objectives in each category can be expected to feature in any social context. The overall configuration of spheres and objectives in a society or community, which dominate and how others are viewed, varies according to the hinterland of norms and traditions - indeed could be taken as expressive of it. Many variations of socio-cultural configurations are possible. Dynamics (between objectives and their value-bases) will be generated within and between configurations.

To move away from this level of abstraction if still some distance from policy, it becomes clear that within each sphere different objectives are possible, as are preferred strategies for achieving the same objective. Sometimes the achievement of an objective will be understood to be contingent on the achievement, or non-achievement, of others. Areas of incompatibility might be found within categories of objectives (e.g. diametrically opposed political

ideologies such as democracy and dictatorship) or across categories (e.g. religious ideology dictates that wealth creation is sinful). Some objectives can be seen as ends and others relegated to a means of achieving them. Socio-cultural configurations (of spheres and objectives) might be led by political or religious ideology, the goal of wealth creation or of maximising social welfare, each of which could subjugate or subsume others. For example, religion might be unconcerned with political ideology or wealth creation, or regard them as undermining its tenets. The drive to create wealth might eclipse other objectives, or political ideology might advocate wealth creation. A concern for maximising social welfare might be the declared primary objective, under the guise of which political, economic or religious objectives acquire credibility. The generation of income and wealth may be seen as the best way to promote well-being, or vice versa. Judgements about the appropriate balance of freedoms and constraints must surely be relative; what is deemed 'appropriate' depends on other objectives and underpinning norms. The realisation of civil objectives seems likely to be led by others, rather than lead others.

The extent to which objectives are, or are perceived as, mutually and unavoidably exclusive determines the varieties of configurations that can co-exist and the extent of choice about routes to inclusion within a given society or community. Notwithstanding that some objectives and overall configurations will be inherently incompatible, this suggests that to maximise inclusion of diversity the aim should be to accommodate as many objectives as possible. If diversity is to be valued rather than merely tolerated, then objectives and configurations need to be understood as mutually supporting. This is not to advocate 'difference-blindness' (Taylor 1992), although implicit contradiction may only become expressed as conflict once attention is drawn to it. Conversely, a closer examination of supposed incompatibilities might reveal unimagined similarities and benefits, or at least scope for co-existence. Moreover, it is not necessarily impossible for mutually exclusive alternatives to be accommodated. Democracy not only represents a device for managing contradiction, to be meaningful it requires that the electorate be presented with clear-cut choices.

Certain personal characteristics or capacities will be valued as propitious to the fulfilment of a given objective, others devalued (see Gore *et al.* 1995 on the different 'social assets' required for inclusion into different types of market). Certain capacities will be appropriate for the pursuit of some, though not other, objectives (Walzer 1983). To value many objectives expands scope for people with different capacities to be included on a basis of

'complex equality' (Walzer 1983). Objectives and capacities are thus different but equally valued. Moreover, competitive dynamics should be diffused as people strive towards different goals.

Table 2: Maximising the inclusion of diversity - mutually supporting means and ends

Objectives/ ends: Achieved by/ means:	Economic	Social	Political	Civil	Cultural
Economic		Economic prosperity increases well-being	Political power/ ability to frame increases with economic prosperity	Justice promoted by economic prosperity	Belief-set/ behavioural code promoted by economic prosperity
Social	Well-being increases productivity/ prosperity		Political power/ ability to frame increases with well-being	Justice promoted by well-being	Belief-set/ behavioural code promoted by well-being
Political	Resources mobilised to maximise income/ wealth generation	Resources mobilised to maximise well-being		Justice promoted by political power/ ability to mobilise resources	Resources mobilised to promote belief-set/ behavioural code
Civil	Rights embody freedoms/ constraints in order to maximise income/ wealth generation	Rights embody freedoms/ constraints in order to maximise well-being, eg social rights to guaranteed minimum resources	Rights embody freedoms/ constraints in order to maximise political power/ ability to frame		Belief-set/ behavioural code promoted, or permitted, by rights-based freedoms and constraints
Cultural	Belief-set/ behavioural code promotes economic prosperity	Belief-set/ behavioural code promotes well-being	Belief-set/ behavioural code promotes political power/ ability to frame	Justice promoted by adherence to belief-set/ behavioural code	

Levels

It is proposed that spheres, their institutions and processes, can span all levels of society, from supranational down to household and individual. The level of their primary locus can vary. For example, globalisation might indicate that the locus of the economic sphere is shifting away from nation to supranational level. Social sphere objectives to support well-being are sometimes seen as the provenance of national states, while others would relegate them to family or individual level. Where national governments devolve responsibilities to regional structures, there can be tensions between them. Like the dominance of particular spheres or objectives, the emphasis on each level – particularly the location of decision-making powers – may be contested.

Institutions associated with each sphere may exist at different societal levels, providing a focus for locating socio-cultural configurations. Each institution may have its own culture, accepted and unquestioned ways of operating, etc. The socio-cultural context provided by the surrounding community may be more immediately significant to inclusion than that pertaining more widely. Each community may have its own localised culture. Additionally, there may be cultural clashes or mismatches between societal levels. Dynamics will therefore be generated by the interplay between levels as well as spheres. They may be ‘horizontal’, i.e. generated by friction between different norms and objectives at the same societal level, or ‘vertical’, at different levels. This clearly risks challenging social cohesion.

Levels can be viewed according to the extent of geographical terrain they encompass, and/ or where geographically they are located. The existence of levels provides one means of accommodating diversity within the boundaries of a common framework or mainstream, thereby retaining social cohesion. The broad parameters for policy – objectives, strategy and required actions and constraints – might be set at a higher level (encompassing a wide geographical area), with lower levels (areas within it) free beyond that to add, develop and implement subject to local conditions. This permits flexibility to acknowledge differences, while preserving unifying similarities. For example, there may be policy-relevant variations regarding demography, culture and traditions, geographical features, or labour market conditions.

This implies that, while the broad framework remains pertinent to all, the amount to be delegated should reflect the extent of policy-relevant differences between localities.

Moreover, devolution down to a smaller scale serves to empower local communities, giving them more say over priorities and how they should be delivered. If power is devolved to myriad institutions at a local level, power is shared between more individuals; if institutions exist in different spheres, roles may be different yet equal. In contrast, if power is concentrated in the hands of the few at a higher level, the disempowerment of local communities and individuals increases – unless communications between levels are open and transparent, and there is accountability downwards.

Dangers for social cohesion ensue where the unifying framework is so thin, and communications between localities so sparse, that separated, ghettoised communities emerge. ‘Otherness’ becomes imputed and differences exaggerated, while the commonality provided by the framework fades from view. Where the identities of local communities are reinforced through opposition to outsiders, mobility between areas becomes curtailed by ‘geography traps’. There are dangers too for service users, where conditions and needs are basically constant across localities, yet different policy arrangements prevail. On the plus side, this might engender innovation and the sharing of good practice; more negatively, different access criteria, assessment procedures, etc, can inhibit social mobility. For example, if a disabled person’s support needs remain the same wherever s/he lives yet her/his support package is not transferable between local authority areas, s/he may be unable to move to live in another area. Boundaries can also be created by the interface between spheres and levels in that it is possible to be excluded from processes relating to one sphere and not others, depending on societal level. For example, it is possible to purchase many goods (economic sphere) irrespective of area of residency, but not to stand for election (political sphere) as a Councillor, except in the area where one lives or works.

Taking devolution to extreme, it is possible to confine (perceived or actually) incompatible differences to particular geographical areas, each with their own set of institutions. However, this ceases to be a mechanism for accommodating diversity and becomes a means of excluding it from the wider social mainstream. The balance between higher level framework and devolution is clearly significant in maximising the inclusion of diversity while sustaining cohesion

The private sphere – or level?

Incompatible diversity can be devolved down to the level of family or household, at which point it tips into the so-called private sphere, out of public view (e.g. see Barry 2001 on the relegation of religion to the private sphere as the liberal answer to religious conflict). The spheres discussed all concern what occurs on the public stage (although whether explicitly debated, or visible to all actors implicated, is another matter). It is these 'public' spheres that are generally considered relevant to social (i.e. from society) exclusion. However, there is another 'sphere' worthy of mention.

The private sphere covers what occurs within the privacy of family/ household settings, beyond the purview of the state and its agents. Feminists have drawn attention to how the unequal distribution of child-care responsibilities between couples (private sphere) detracts from equality in the work-place (public/ economic sphere), preventing women from competing on equal terms (Rees 1998). Although described as a sphere, it is proposed that it makes more sense to conceptualise it as a level at which all spheres have relevance, even if their operations are not formalised. Wherever they occur, child-care or care of a disabled adult remain part of the social sphere. The distribution of responsibilities, power and income, expectations about objectives, cultural practices and behavioural norms, can all occur within a family unit – even if situated within the wider socio-cultural context and absorbing much of it. The reason these take place within the 'private sphere' has nothing necessarily to do with the diversity of individual requirements. Instead it might reflect political or financial limitations (actual or perceived) to what can be funded centrally via taxation, wider cultural views about women's role or the family, rights to privacy and the limits of state interference.

This is not to say decision-making is never devolved down to family or individual levels on grounds of their diversity. Indeed, the ethos of privatisation is based on precisely this. Through the market, it is argued, individuals are empowered to choose the goods and services which best match their specific needs or aspirations. Such diversity, it continues, could never be catered for, and empowerment consequently could not be achieved, by cumbersome, bureaucratic state-run institutions. They too need to adopt market practices. Privatisation should thus be extended beyond the supermarket to encompass community care, schools, and hospitals. Privatisation is the way to include diversity on the basis of empowerment.

Whether alternative ways to reflect diversity and promote empowerment exist will be discussed later. For now, it is pertinent to note that there will be limits to the number of large institutions like schools and hospitals that can exist in a given geographical area, reflecting the size and nature of the surrounding population, irrespective of whether provided by public or private sector. Bearing in mind time, cost and transport limitations, choice will be contingently limited.

Processes

Processes of formulation and delivery span institutions at different societal levels, sectors and possibly spheres. They may be concerned with production and/ or distribution, among other functions. Formal bureaucratic processes can be deconstructed into interconnected stages at which certain actions occur: “The formal property process created a whole infrastructure of connecting devices that, like a railway switchyard, allowed the assets (trains) to run safely between people (stations)” (de Soto 2001, p58). Processes are enacted through relationships between people placed in different roles, carrying out different functions.

Particular goods may be associated with each sphere. Some, notably education, can be thought of as a ‘generic’ good in that it has potential to further objectives of different spheres, and may be delivered by institutions associated with them (as demonstrated by church/ religious schools, current proposals to allow businesses, charities and others to assume responsibilities for formerly state-run schools, etc). Possession of designated goods, participation in a particular process and associated relationships can be prioritised as the route to inclusion into a particular sphere (e.g. employment - see chapter 5) and become indicative of inclusion into it. There are obvious dangers in narrowly focusing education on one sphere to the exclusion of others. To be fully included requires engagement with various processes, social relationships and settings.

Discussion in chapter 2 drew attention to the importance for social justice of coherence in terms of consistency between the meaning or purpose of the good and access criteria for its distribution. This finds echoes in Lockwood’s (1992) theory of systems and social integration. It is not just a matter of each process separately being coherent, there needs to be coherence between processes. The more incoherent the process and interconnections between processes (i.e. the less well systems are integrated), the greater may be the strain on

the relationships between those attempting to hold them together and make them work (i.e. the greater the strain on social integration).

As social mobility is important for full inclusion, the design of any process needs to take into account its wider impact. Participation in one should not unnecessarily (i.e. because there is no logical contradiction, they are not mutually exclusive) impede or prevent contemporaneous engagement in other processes. Even where objectives do not conflict, the interface between processes and the goods and services distributed through them may present barriers. For example, if criteria for accessing a good/ service is inappropriately setting-specific (e.g. a disabled person can only get necessary support at home but not if s/he moves into work, wants to attend a political meeting, etc), or contingent on mutable characteristics like incapacity, poverty, or age, then gaps and traps ensue. This may partly reflect the unjoined-up nature of government, where policy objectives can straddle departments, while each develops separate strategy. Partly it may be a consequence of political short-termism leading to unstrategic action even within one department. Either way, the importance of social mobility for inclusion poses significant challenges to social policy concerned with targeting resources on disadvantage. It underlines the importance of locating all policy initiatives within the bigger picture to achieve overall, enable each to be strategic, and avoid gaps and traps.

Networks

A focus on processes and social relationships has implications for the conceptualisation of society and its structures. Social network analysts claim that: "...the social environment can be expressed as patterns or regularities in relationships between interacting units", and that the network perspective gives "...precise formal definition to aspects of the political, economic, or social structural environment" (Wasserman and Faust 1994, p3). Network models "...conceptualise structure (social, economic, political, and so forth) as lasting patterns of relations among actors" (Wasserman and Faust 1994, p4). However, networks can also be informal, fluid and transient, forming around a particular issue or area of interest, then dissipating (see Rhodes 1981, Smith 1993 on 'policy communities' and networks). As Bourdieu (1997) suggests, 'more or less institutionalized' relationships form networks, through which acts of mutual recognition occur. Relationship ties serve as channels for the transfer or 'flow' of resources, whether material or non-material (Wasserman and Faust

1994). Interestingly, both social justice themes of recognition and distribution are cited in this context.

Society can be envisaged as comprised of ‘memberships’, with people having access to differing numbers, types and combinations. Inclusion might then depend on whether different memberships and associated activities have equal value or status, and whether certain memberships unjustifiably prevent or grant access to others. Cohesion might depend on crossovers between memberships, or different memberships forming discrete clusters. Society thus becomes conceptualised as a mish-mash of fluid, intersecting networks, where individuals with multiple aspects to their identity are connected to multiple corresponding relationship networks. Not all are members of the same networks, but collectively the crossovers between network memberships can be tight enough to form a coherent, cohesive whole.

Such networks might provide the infrastructure for what Anderson calls “...the creation of stable cross-class, cross-generational, cross-ethnicity and cross-gender redistribution of public goods, income and time resources” (1999, p141). Relationship networks may converge on particular spheres and their institutions, spanning them where processes do likewise. Moreover, if institutions and associated relationship networks are necessary for distribution, access to resources will be contingent on membership. A series of discontinuous memberships (or denials of them) and their consequences – can thus come to be expressed in terms of continuous spectrums of inequality. Networks are what tie component parts of society together (spheres, levels, institutions, communities and individuals) and the extent to which they intermesh determines social cohesion.

For network analysts, the units of analysis include households, social categories, and neighbourhoods. Individuals are ‘included’ through attachment to social networks via different types of relationship tie. These include ties such as friendship, liking, or respect; transfer of resources, behavioural interaction (talking together, sending messages); mobility (migration, social, or physical); physical connection (e.g. road, river, bridge), formal or biological relationships (Wasserman and Faust 1994). It is noticeable that some of these (friendship, formal, biological) seem to refer to the type of relationship, some (behavioural interaction, physical connection) describe mechanisms for relationship enactment, and others (transfer of resources) concern the purpose of the relationship. They are dealt with separately

in the framework proposed here: the purpose of the relationship determines its type, while certain social conditions are required for its enactment (see below).

Relationship networks may not only converge on institutions, but on collective events. The importance of events, occasions, or gatherings has been stressed not just by network analysts. Bourdieu sees the production of 'occasions' (rallies, cruises, hunts, parties, etc) as a means of bringing together "...individuals as homogenous as possible in all the pertinent respects in terms of the existence and persistence of the group" (1997, p52). They are therefore a means of reinforcing the boundaries of peer group membership. Similarly Goffman sees ceremonies embodied in social or celebratory occasions as "...mechanisms which allow the participants to affirm their affiliation and commitment to their collectivities..." (1983, p9). The production of 'occasions' provides a new slant on the meaning of 'customary activities' and why being unable to participate in them may have symbolic (in conveying group membership) as well as practical significance (in providing access to resources). However, there is no obvious reason why events could not equally serve to bring together separate groups or networks to extend them or facilitate mutually beneficial exchanges.

It might be supposed that networks are composed of people (or other units) who share something in common, and the strength of the network and of social cohesion is proportionate to the degree of commonality. If so, the prospects for maximising the inclusion of diversity look bleak. This initially appears to be reinforced by Granovetter: "...the strength of a tie is a (probably linear) combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding), and the reciprocal services which characterize the tie" (1973, p1361). Yet, to achieve an objective may require the input of different characteristics (skills, goods, etc) to those already possessed. This points in contradictory directions - that networks can be held together either by a shared commonality or by mutually enriching difference. The imperative to extend networks for distribution, locate resources required for production, or identify new opportunities for any form of transaction, acts as an incentive to engage with new networks: "...those to whom we are weakly tied are more likely to move in circles different from our own and will thus have access to information different from that we receive" (Granovetter 1973, p1371). Such attachments may be weak in Granovetter's terms in that they are not based on emotional intensity or intimacy, yet nonetheless vital for practical reasons. Ties may be strong in closely-knit networks or cliques, but naturally veer towards insularity and exclusivity: "Weak ties are

more likely to link members of *different* small groups than are strong ones, which tend to be concentrated within particular groups” (Granovetter 1973, p1376).

The establishment of numerous self-contained, unconnected cliques is the route to macro-level social fragmentation, even if membership of a clique brings micro-level inclusion. The importance of ‘weak ties’ is therefore suggested, if the aim is to maximise the inclusion of diversity: “...weak ties are an important resource in making possible mobility opportunity” (Granovetter 1973, p1373). However, before connections between groups or networks are forged, an individual might need ‘strong ties’ to a peer group. Without a firm basis from which to proceed, the instability and unpredictability of ‘weak ties’ might pose too great a risk. Moreover, the more secure the peer group identity, the less it may be threatened by new arrivals and the less it will require shoring up through emphasis on others’ difference, leading to increasing heterogeneity within peer groups and hence greater inclusion.

Social cohesion can be said to be contingent on the strength of interconnection between ‘clusters’ of relationship networks, whether strength is contingent on emotional intensity or the practical usefulness of others’ resources. Strong ties can lead to social fragmentation, unless weak ties also exist to connect closely bound groups or networks together. Strong ties to peer groups and weak ties to wider networks are both necessary for inclusion and social mobility. The mainstream embraces all attached clusters. Under such a definition, different arrangements (patterns or regularities) of clusters may be possible, i.e. that there are various ways of attaching disparate groupings to achieve inclusion within the mainstream, that the mainstream can be structured (by patterns of networks) in different ways.

Relationships

If network ties are of different types, and networks form structures, particular types of relationships may be associated with each sphere. There are precedents for this proposition. As discussed in chapter 2, Miller went some way to associating types of relationship with objectives.¹ To identify the qualities of relationships should help understanding of what encourages or discourages attachment, and hence what qualities are conducive to promoting inclusion. Micro-level implications are pursued in chapter 8. Here the aim is to theorise ideal types associated with each sphere – not to suggest that these exist in a pure form - indeed, even at a theoretical level this is shown to be problematic. Instead the purpose is to help

distinguish qualities, and combinations of qualities, that relationships can have. This builds on discussion of the objectives, value-bases and drivers of different spheres.

If an 'ideal-type' economic objective is to maximize wealth and profit, transactors will engage in order to profit and are assessed to determine their capacity to generate profit. It implies pragmatic assessment of costs and benefits and inflexibility in doing other than implementing conclusions, irrespective of wider societal or personal repercussions. The objective, value-base and drivers accord with Stewart's (2000) description of 'contract'-based relationships as impersonal (concerned solely with the capacity of individuals to do what is required), ignoring structural factors, pragmatic and goal-driven. Yet, relationships may be collaborative, if collaboration increases competitive advantage. If competition is the ultimate driver, collaboration will always be conditional. If a better equipped (promising greater profit) collaborator emerges, new skills are required or old skills rendered redundant by the changed economic environment, relationships will be terminated. If inequality is, as Walker contends Thatcher governments viewed it: "...an engine of enterprise, providing incentives for those at the bottom as well as those at the top" (1997; p5), a driver as well as a consequence, it suggests that relationships may be asymmetrical, in terms of the resources and powers of the parties concerned. They may be unstable in situations of rapid economic change. This is not to say that relationships cannot be based on trust, if trust is contingent on predictability. The clarity of the objective helps to render behaviours predictable.

In contrast, a social objective to maximize integration through solidarity, its value-base and drivers conform to Stewart's (2000) 'compact' model of relationships based on mutuality, interdependence and loyalty, solidarity and collective empowerment. Relationships are held together by concern for the well-being of others rather than the quest for personal profit. They are not pragmatic or driven by individual goals, neither are they contingent on particular characteristics beyond those required for membership of: "...a bounded society with a determinate membership, forming a universe of distribution" (Miller 2001, p4; also Walzer 1983; Rawls 1973). If relationships within that boundary are premised on the equal value of those included, and judgments about worth are consequently redundant, the relationship is unconditional. This presupposes the trustworthiness of members, irrespective of scope for unpredictability. If the source of mutuality and interdependence is not the pragmatic need for others' resources to meet personal goals, it implies that support, solidarity, unconditionality, trust, etc, arise from emotional drivers. The driver of equality

might be taken to indicate symmetry to relationships based on solidarity, although a desire to reduce inequality presupposes – and requires underlining – its existence.

Political relationships formed to mobilize resources towards a goal suggest they are likely to feature distinct roles, of instigator/s and respondent/s. Relationships may be adversarial (with opponents), or collaborative (with supporters), subject to judgments about which tactically is most effective. In their ‘ideal’ form, they are pragmatic like economic profit-driven goals, although it does not follow that they must be concerned to promote economic goals. As power can operate overtly or covertly, goals may not be openly declared if judged counter-productive to achieving them. Influence (even coercion) may similarly operate in a concealed way. This provides scope for relationships to be complex and manipulative, unlike economic relationships where direction and motivation is clear-cut. The shifting environment of competing ideologies, interests, inequalities and tactics will require skilful negotiation and communication, whatever the goal – and goals too can shift. The existence of scope for gaps between presentation and intent, even if unexploited, makes it difficult to engender trust. While politicians may operate at a pragmatic level, allegiances may nonetheless be founded on emotional responses - greed, fear, loyalty, etc.² Indeed, asymmetries in power, access to information and awareness of goals make it hard to build trust on reasoned, rational grounds.

Cultural relationships are more difficult to pin down, partly because of the potential for variation, and partly because cultural codes may well not be explicitly defined and consciously realised. An ‘ideal-type’ cultural relationship is one which prioritises adherence to a particular belief-set, value-base and behavioural code beyond all other objectives. Yet, as culture potentially infuses and prioritises all other objectives and governs how they are enacted, culture may be expressed via those relationships. If the driver is conformity, it implies judgmental relationships. These may be symmetrical, in that each judges the other and has equal power to enforce conformity; each has equivalent freedoms and constraints. They are asymmetrical where there is a hierarchy to judgment, and freedoms and constraints differ. Where belief-sets, value-bases and codes are explicit, even if oppressive, and the parties to the relationship are known to adhere to them, there will be trust based on predictability.

Civil relationships could be said to revolve around functions of policing and judging, the prevention or enforcement of actions, in accordance with concepts of retributive (as opposed to social) justice. There is asymmetry in the relationship of judge and judged, police and

policed, enforcer and the subject of enforcement - unless all parties are simultaneously cast into both roles. While rights and obligations can be a means of redressing asymmetries, they may or may not be equitably distributed. An 'ideal-type' relationship implies scrutiny and potential challenge against a legal blue-print. This would be empowering if it enabled those without power to scrutinize and challenge those with power. Yet, it might also be deemed to undermine non-judgmental solidarity.

Relationship ideal-types thus range from the closeness of unconditional yet binding family-member-type relationships (broadly 'social'), to those entered into, or exited from, on a calculated basis ('economic'), to 'relationships' which are imposed yet distance between the parties is in-built, such as between police and those policed ('civil'). Each implies a different degree of proximity, subjectivity or objectivity. Although argued by some (chapter 5) that inclusion should be subjectively experienced rather than merely an objective, technical fact, it does not follow that all relationships are appropriately 'subjective'. For example, objectivity rather than subjective partiality is critical to the effective performance of 'civil' policing functions. To introduce greater subjectivity would not necessarily increase the inclusion of diversity, but could instead open the door to discriminatory practices.

Combining types

While it is possible to describe the particular 'ideal-type' relationship which logically should be required to achieve a particular objective, it is also clear that different relationships can have properties in common, even if the combination of properties is specific to each. Even in its ideal form, each can include elements of the others and needs either to accommodate or repress the impact of others. Thus, for example, an economic ideal-type objective can be furthered by cultural ideal-type commitment, or unquestioning solidarity, to a firm or a product. Political-style negotiation may be required to 'manage' external competition and internal (to a firm) pressures and challenges. Without legal powers to enforce contracts, the edifice crumbles (see de Soto 2001). Similarly, the achievement of an ideal-type social objective and its altruistic ethos might be undermined by economic impoverishment, causing the boundaries of the 'distributive universe' (Miller 2001) to shrink. It requires cultural commitment and consensus about boundaries and the basis for distribution. Political management may be required to sustain consensus, to root out or repress more selfish, calculating behaviour to which the social ideal-type will always be vulnerable. There need to be enforceable legal parameters within which to contain and control such behaviours at the

margins. Similar points could be made about other ideal-types: cultural commitment may be undermined by economic hardship; if the law is to be upheld it needs to be founded on broad public solidarity, and to enforce rights and obligations requires economic resources.

In a sense this ‘embeds’ (using Polanyi’s term) the relationship, not necessarily institutionally but into other spheres. It could be argued that all institutions and their processes, whatever the primary objective, whatever ‘sphere’ they are primarily located in, contain elements or features of other ideal-type objectives and relationships. The balance between them varies, but all must be present to some degree. Another way of conceptualizing this would be to say that within any formal social process, sub-objectives intervene – to finance (economic), to regulate (civil), to manage (political), and that the properties of associated relationships will vary accordingly. If so, while the distinction between types of relationship may be meaningful and helpful, it is too simplistic to align them with particular spheres. Even though an institution is primarily dedicated to economic, social, political, cultural or civil objectives, it does not follow that all relationships within it are of that type.

This reinforces why an ‘ideal-type’ objective which does not accommodate or negates other spheres is problematic. Instead, it can be argued that all have a role to play and all should be tempered by each other. While imbalances will be inevitable in pursuit of any particular objective, beyond certain limits they become unsustainable, leading to systems and/ or social disintegration. In many respects, this elaborates upon Walzer’s (1983) concerns that the principles for distribution in one sphere should not apply to others, if the emergence of dominant goods is to be avoided. The need for balance could be understood as an expression of the need for complex equality (chapter 2).

Socio-cultural conditions for participation

For individuals to participate in processes and relationships it is to be expected that they would need to fulfil some form of criteria for access, whether or not formally expressed. However, it is proposed that access is not guaranteed merely by being able to meet such criteria. Unless certain socio-cultural conditions prevail, participation is impossible, irrespective of income or skills.

For processes to be designed and enacted successfully, it is evident that the parties involved need to be able to communicate with each other. Prospective recipients may need physically to demonstrate that they meet criteria in the presence of assessors. To receive a good may also require the parties concerned to be physically present in a specified place. If communication cannot or does not occur, or physical co-presence is impossible, processes cannot be enacted, regardless of whether access criteria are met or the willingness of all parties to participate in them. This signals the existence of what could be termed 'transactional infrastructure' and the critical importance of it being accessible to maximise inclusion. Inadequate transactional infrastructure can serve as a rationing mechanism, irrespective of formal rationing criteria. It therefore becomes helpful to consider the components of such infrastructure before proceeding to explore how and if it can be made more accessible – and the consequences of inaccessibility for those with particular characteristics.

A typology of barriers

Underpinning inaccessible infrastructure lie culturally embedded values and assumptions leading to misrecognition (chapter 1), or discrimination (chapter 4). The impact of *negative attitudes* extends beyond the practical requirements here described as transactional infrastructure, potentially to encompass all aspects of process. Distorted attitudes may minimise and infantilise, protection can become restriction, and fear of 'otherness' become demonisation (chapter 4). Norms may well be undetectable by those who have grown up with them. Whatever their characteristics, people are part of that culture even if it reinforces their exclusion. An acceptance of limitations, roles, etc, can be implicitly accepted by all as appropriate, even inevitable. If people with certain characteristics are not expected to participate, the accessibility of infrastructure will not be questioned. If people with those characteristics then do not participate, negative assumptions are reinforced as left unchallenged.

Access to information is clearly of vital importance for social inclusion: "...information as the essential ingredient of a free and inclusive society..." (Stewart 2000, p295). Information is needed about opportunities to participate³, the parameters and criteria for relationships, to enact assessment procedures, compare or design products and services, etc. Without accessible information and a communication infrastructure through which to convey it, people whose first language is not that of the dominant culture and those with

communication impairments will have difficulties accessing transactions, irrespective of their capacities. Others may manage to access them, but may be inarticulate, or have language styles or accents which mean they are not heard, not understood or simply not well received.

Environmental barriers, most obviously in the form of inaccessible premises, also mean that transactions cannot occur. Environmental barriers take many forms. Stairs present a barrier to wheel-chair users, the unfamiliarity or formality of a place may be a barrier to mental health service users and others, some environments may be or feel unsafe to women, older people, or people from black or minority ethnic communities (see discussion in chapter 5 of 'interdictory spaces', 'slippery space', 'prickly space' and 'jittery space'). Certain goods or services are only available to people living in a given locality (such as access to specific schools) and the terms of others may vary depending on place of residence (e.g. car insurance).

Obviously, to be physically present in a specified location requires that it is possible to get there. Yet *inadequate transport* perhaps due to poor design can render it inaccessible to people with small children, elderly people or people with certain forms of impairment. Transport infrastructure may not exist in rural or remote areas. Even if it does, it may be unreliable, be or feel unsafe. As flagged above, there may be limits to the number of hospitals or schools that it is feasible to establish – a specialist hospital in every local neighbourhood may well be an unrealistic proposition. There may be no shops or companies providing work in deprived areas and journeys may be lengthy, complex, time-consuming and/ or expensive, leading to whole communities becoming excluded.

To participate in processes requires *time*. Yet, time will always be limited in as much as time spent on one thing in one place cannot simultaneously be spent on something somewhere else. 'Private sphere' commitments like child-care mean that less time is available for other activities like earning income. Inflexibility in the timing of assistance to a disabled person with getting up, washing and dressing restricts the time available to go to work or attend appointments (an example of incoherence between processes). The time-frame available can also place restrictions on how long a person can travel (e.g. to attend school), how much complex information can be conveyed and understood, with implications for the meaningfulness of consumer choice and for assessments of prospective recipients by

providers. It also has resource implications for the latter, where staff work for a limited number of hours and must achieve a certain level of throughput.

The barriers arising from inaccessible transactional infrastructure are thus of different sorts. It is possible to describe these as a typology of (sometimes inter-connected) barriers: attitudinal; communicational; environmental; transport/ mobility; time. They can be expected to impact differently on people with different characteristics and/or circumstances. However, by cutting across social categories these could be described as generic barriers. This suggests that sometimes action to tackle one form of barrier can have a positive impact for people with various characteristics. It also indicates how social categories based on characteristics can be reframed; how commonalities cross-sect them, shifting the boundaries between sameness and difference.

Addressing barriers

The rapid expansion of IT has had a major impact, opening up access to information - although creating new barriers for those without access to the internet, the education or capacity to use it. As suggested, though, there may be inherent limits to the amount of information a person can absorb. A surfeit of information may increase the difficulties of distinguishing relevant from irrelevant factors, leading to misrecognition. However, a further positive consequence of IT developments has been to overcome environmental barriers. Effective communications, and the enactment of social relationships increasingly become possible without physical 'co-presence' being necessary (chapter 5). Yet, to carry out certain roles still entails physical presence in specific locations.

Some (but not all) infrastructural barriers may be surmountable if the individual has sufficient income to fund alternatives. For example, inaccessible public transport may be circumvented by those with enough money to afford taxis (although taxis may also be inaccessible or unavailable), or the money and capacity to own and drive a car. If the individual has sufficient status, this might over-ride negative cultural associations with other characteristics and provide incentives to make adjustments around that individual. Examples include a visiting statesman whose first language is not English, or an MP with a disability. However, if people with certain characteristics are prevented by inhospitable social conditions from participating in processes which cumulatively lead to the acquisition of status, the numbers occupying such positions will be few. Adjustments on such grounds are

anyway likely to be personalised, failing to recognise the wider population barred from participation.

It is these sorts of barriers which are generally considered when the aim is to create 'equal opportunity', i.e. to access a process, although they pervade all stages and can inhibit access to, and the performance of, all roles. As generic social barriers, they can be construed as relating to both processes and the wider social environment (two sites for intervention), where processes and social environment come together, the former sited within the wider context of the latter. Yet they can also be construed as 'personal' barriers (chapter 4); that the characteristics or circumstances of the individual prevent their participation, not the external environment, or the way a process is delivered.

Shaping the mainstream

To maximise the inclusion of diversity into the mainstream it is clearly necessary to understand what 'the mainstream' is. It is a term which can be applied to society overall, to institutional processes, to policies, programmes, products and services. It conveys notions of encompassing the majority, of standard or usual practices, of the normal and normative. Minorities may subsequently be included via special treatment or specialist measures, add-on programmes, action which deviates from the norm. It is important to understand the nature of 'the mainstream' in that a) its nature determines who is excluded or at risk of exclusion b) there may be ways of reconceptualising and reconfiguring it so that people can be included without recourse to special measures. Through changing the mainstream difference may be embraced, stigma eradicated, and a zero-sum outcome avoided.

Having developed a means of conceptualising society's form and components and possible variations, it is now a matter of clarifying the limitations to expansion (a number of which have already been flagged). It then becomes possible to envisage ways in which the components of society might be configured to accommodate difference.

Limitations

To summarise, there may be mutually exclusive objectives, or configurations of objectives. Some configurations were more exclusive than others, but theoretical let alone practical

limitations exist to the extent to which any one 'ideal-type' objective and relationship can be pursued to the exclusion of others. These are underpinned by conflicts in cultural values, norms and expectations. Practical structural limitations exist to the number of large institutions, such as schools or hospitals that can exist in any one locality, with implications for consumer choice. There will be limits to how much can be devolved before communities are effectively 'cut adrift', i.e. a point beyond which devolution to accommodate diversity becomes exclusion from wider society. In a rapidly changing environment buffeted by external and internal pressures, there may be practical limitations to the capacity of politicians to adhere to the development of a long-term policy strategy. With regard to transactional infrastructure, time-based limitations have consequences for the number of processes and activities that can be engaged in simultaneously. Both time and capacity limitations restrict the amount of information that can be assimilated. Finally, it is conceivable that measures to open up access for some might restrict access for others.

Accommodating diversity

Difference and 'special treatment'

The relationship of 'the mainstream' to 'difference' could be construed as a battle from which only a zero-sum outcome is possible. Either the different group changes (or is changed) to conform, or they acquire special, separate status and treatment. The mainstream may tolerate their difference because it poses no real threat and can effectively be ignored by the majority, perhaps because it can be offloaded into the private sphere, confined to a geographical area or within the walls of an institution. None of these challenge or change the mainstream status quo. Rather, they signal exclusion from it. To maximise the inclusion of diversity requires other tactics.

There can be considerable ambiguity towards difference. It can be valued, both by those who are 'different' and wider society, and special treatment becomes a mark of esteem or privilege. However, even if groups take pride in their identity, difference can be equated by wider society with disadvantage and inferiority, and exclusion from the mainstream can be unchosen. In such circumstances, special treatment can underline the negative connotations of difference. It can be stigmatising and bring disincentives to participate. Far from bringing people into the mainstream it propels them further from it. Yet, there can also be competition

between disadvantaged groups for the resources needed to fund special treatment, particularly where it is vital to meeting basic needs.

Whether a mark of privilege or disadvantage, special treatment requires justification (see Williams 1969). At a macro level, discussions of multi-culturalism highlight the wider social tensions which can arise from applying different rules to people from minority ethnic or religious groupings (e.g. Barry 2001). The legitimacy of special treatment is contingent on assessments of desert, often (but not always) linked to assessments of need. Understandable resentment is provoked by the removal of generally applicable onerous requirements from people who appear entirely capable of fulfilling them. Yet resentment can still arise when requirements do not appear particularly onerous, such as the granting of permission for Sikhs not to wear motor cycle helmets, or for Muslim school-girls to cover their heads.

Even where there is a concern to promote inclusion, in preference to making changes to usual arrangements, special arrangements may be made to enable specific individuals to participate. For example, people with visual impairment may have to request leaflets in large print, when all leaflets could be produced in larger print; temporary ramps for wheel-chair users are installed when a permanent ramp could be used by all without disadvantaging anyone; concessions are provided for certain groups to use taxis rather than insisting that public transport is designed to be accessible; flexibility in working hours is allowed for certain individuals when greater flexibility could be provided for all, etc. Thus, adjustment to the mainstream to accommodate difference does not have to be 'zero-sum', opening up access to some at the expense of others.

Accommodating difference

Where it is impossible to open up access for some without negative repercussions for others, different strategies are required. 'Special' treatment becomes justifiable; exclusion from the mainstream may be the only route to ultimate inclusion into it. Diversity may be accommodated by delegating powers to lower societal levels, proportionate and appropriate to the degree of difference between localities, while maintaining a common over-arching framework. The same principle might apply to network formation. Given that individuals have multiple characteristics and combinations of characteristics, in theory they could be members of many peer groups. Each individual represents a point of interface between numerous networks and groups. Thus, accommodating difference entails the recognition of

commonalities and differences, then building on possible points of commonality as connection points between otherwise diverse people. However, as discussed above, networks are not just founded on commonality. It may also be a matter of showing how differences contribute to achieving objectives.

Application to welfare provision

The framework of components can be used as a basis for identifying macro-level features of current welfare provision, and to indicate potential directions for policy. The following is not intended as an in-depth analysis but an illustration of the applicability of the social framework described above.

The objectives for state welfare can be construed in 'ideal-type' economic or social terms. Regarding the former, welfare goods and services could be cast as the means of preparing workers for participation in the labour force. Where surplus to current requirements, welfare sustains a reserve workforce, keeping them sufficiently well-fed, clothed, educated and healthy to be called upon if needed, and meanwhile making them disinclined to revolt (with economically disastrous consequences). It is harder to explain in 'ideal-type' economic terms the rationale for providing publicly-funded welfare goods and services to older people, or those who for whatever reason can never reasonably be expected to contribute to the economy. The 'solution' (in 'ideal economic' terms) might be to relegate responsibility to the private sphere, making it the personal responsibility of individuals to provide for their own old age and offloading responsibility onto families. The purview of the 'social sphere' is thus devolved away from the national state down to myriad localized small-scale structures (families) and to individuals. Simultaneously, the economic sphere expands at supranational level, and the focus for welfare provision is on equipping individuals and national economies to compete in global markets. In an alternative model, a social ideal-type objective for public welfare provision prevails at national level, where the primary aim is to promote integration into wider society and concern for the well-being of fellow citizens. Solidarity extends beyond immediate family members. There may be an aim further to extend the purview of the social sphere (and solidarity) to encompass clusters of countries. Here the social sphere takes precedence over the economic sphere. Attempts are made to constrain the boundaries of the latter to national parameters, or those of an expanded social sphere.

These two models find expression in competing visions for the European Union (itself an expansion of political and civil spheres), between what has become known as the Anglo-American economic model and the Continental social model; between economic liberalism/erosion of economic borders and the protectionism of borders (whether national or supranational) viewed as necessary to prevent economic impoverishment and to sustain a social ethos within them. The political challenge is to find ways of rendering them compatible which are both economically and socially beneficial to all concerned. Each model prioritises different scales of economic and social unit, locating in different places the boundary between collaborative membership and external competition. Each signals a different direction for social policy - to build competitive edge or to integrate through mutual solidarity, to erode borders further by increasing mobility, or batten down the hatches.

Regarding the design and delivery of current British welfare services, with the notable exceptions of social security and employment policy, key areas of social policy have been devolved to the Scottish Parliament. It is relatively early days, and the dominance of Labour at both levels may help curtail policy divergence. However, it will be important to remain alert to barriers arising through the interface of reserved and devolved policy, and the scope for 'geography traps'. Opportunities to learn from the different approaches taken by each to tackle the same social problems need to be exploited. Separatist dynamics, perhaps actively generated by the political imperative for the younger, less powerful Scottish Parliament to assert its identity or passively by the oversight of the Westminster Parliament, risk undermining good communications and co-ordinated strategy.

Whether overarching objectives should primarily be cast as economic or social, and the appropriate balance between them, remains open to debate. According to Barry, "...the whole course of public policy in Britain in the past twenty years...has tended to undermine solidarity" (2002, p24). This has occurred through the introduction of market mechanisms - competition for resources imposed on schools and universities, the running down of health-care and education standards prompting those that can to opt-out, etc (Barry 2002). The emphasis in social security policy has been on promoting 'welfare to work', with the mantra of 'work for those that can: security for those that cannot' (DSS 1998). Notwithstanding the introduction of market mechanisms or the basis of the funding regime, relationships between welfare recipients and welfare institutions have long been typically 'contract' in nature⁴. Assessments and delivery of education, health-care, social security, etc, have generally

tended to be impersonal (focusing narrowly on particular aspects of identity only), pragmatic (eschewing emotional content or connection), and goal-driven.

While it can be argued that the collective funding of state welfare through taxation, indeed the very existence of state welfare, hinges on and reinforces solidarity between citizens, it can equally be argued that solidarity is undermined by enforced taxation. To retain support for publicly funded welfare provision, to demonstrate value for tax-payers' money, may require that the relationship between assessor and prospective recipient has features associated with an economic ideal-type, i.e. assessment is pragmatic, based on cost-benefit analysis, rather than the non-judgmental social ideal-type. From the perspective of prospective recipients, this may or may not constitute disincentives to participation, and thus may or may not compound disadvantage, exclusion and disempowerment. But other factors may exist, which impact significantly on the quality and experience of relationships with welfare institutions. Further exploration may reveal other reasons why the structures, enactment and experiences of state welfare have not always been conducive to the inclusion of diversity, empowerment, cohesion and solidarity, whatever the declared intentions to the contrary.

Networks may be a route into welfare institutions, to accessing welfare goods and services, perhaps via information provided by connections with voluntary sector organisations or informal localized social contacts. A network of a limited sort may exist between a service deliverer and her/ his clients, although it is less likely to exist between clients. Even where policy segments recipients into client groups, it does so in order to determine individual entitlement, not to generate peer group networks. Regarding networks leading out of welfare institutions accessed via take-up of welfare goods and services, with the exceptions of employment services and career guidance accessed via education there is little obvious to report. Even though in broad terms the purpose of welfare goods and services could be described as to enhance the capacity of individuals to participate in social processes, through health-care, community care, education, income support, public housing, etc, policy has not generally gone so far as actively to support the wider development of networks, or the attachment of individuals to them. Other than community development work, it is hard to identify examples of policy to strengthen peer groups, even though these can be important for confidence-building. Yet an absence of attachment to networks was identified by some (Perri 6) as a significant factor in causing exclusion. Both strong and weak tie networks appear relevant to welfare provision.

The question remains how access to peer group networks is to be engineered, how peer groups can be supported and how different group networks can be exposed to each other in ways which generate positive connections.

Analysis of the weak-tie bridges that could usefully be created, of the resources that each party could offer and what each needs, might inform the initiation of 'occasions' bringing together different peer groups who could mutually benefit. Through siting different types of support in one location, or by each service signposting other sources of support, access to one service might be achieved when accessing another, forming a network of services. Instead, though, it is often the case that access to welfare services requires initiation by individuals. Even if individuals are better equipped to engage in social processes having accessed welfare services, they may well not have acquired attachments to new networks beyond those they already had, or those directly connected to the service in question. The nature of the networks leading to and from welfare institutions thus require particular attention, if disincentives to take up services are to be avoided and the capacity of welfare institutions to play a pivotal role in promoting wider societal inclusion is to be realised. Otherwise, they cease to be routes to inclusion and become dead-ends, providing a disincentive to engagement.

The creation of hospitable social conditions in the form of accessible infrastructure is of critical importance to maximising the inclusion of diversity. Action has been taken at national level through introducing anti-discrimination legislation to extend rights – much of it driven by developments at European level (such as the European Convention on Human Rights, and the Employment Framework). Significant changes are in the pipe-line for the organisations charged with overseeing such legislation, with the disbanding of separate Commissions for particular social categories⁵ and the establishment of a new Commission for Equality and Human Rights, covering gender, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief. It remains to be seen whether this will facilitate the identification of cross-category issues and the formation of new alliances and greater solidarity – or whether competitive dynamics between groups will be generated in the struggle for limited resources.

¹ Miller (2001) identified three distinct types of relationship, each with different drivers/ objectives and principles of justice. According to him, relations based on solidarity are driven by need, 'instrumental' relations (not as in Sen's usage) by merit, and citizenship by the desire for equality.

² Postmodernists might argue that, in view of the extent of fragmentation and consequent diversity, any attempt to build macro-level consensus is doomed to failure, or at the very least must entail ambiguity and abstraction to such a degree that multiple interpretations remain possible.

³ See Gore *et al.* 1995 on the importance of literacy in accessing labour markets.

⁴ The contractual basis for such relationships was spelt out in the title of the 1998 Green Paper on welfare reform: *New ambitions for our country: a new contract for welfare.*

⁵ The Equal Opportunities Commission (sex/ gender), the Commission for Racial Equality (race) and the Disability Rights Commission (disability).

Chapter 7: A Meso-level View – Social Processes and Relationships

Introduction

Individuals relate to each other and to wider society for various reasons: "...we come together to share, divide and exchange" (Waltzer 1983, p3). In all cases, processes are required and are enacted through social relationships of different types. Echoing the approach of network analysts, Bradley contends: "Social reality can be made up of an infinite number of interconnected sets of relationships." This notion is "...compatible with the idea of reality as process rather than structure." (1996, p44). This is not to say process is the antithesis of structure. Processes, including the designation of roles and parameters for relationships, may be structured by policy in advance of enactment. It should therefore be useful to theorise how processes are structured.

The focus of this thesis is on the processes and relationships between individuals and welfare institutions. Given that the main purpose of welfare institutions is to distribute and that distributive processes have been the focus for much of the preceding discussion on disadvantage, this chapter begins by examining how the process of distribution can be broken down into functions and stages. It considers the roles involved in shaping and enacting processes. Deconstructing processes into stages makes it easier to pinpoint where misrecognition or 'process error' can intervene to scupper policy intentions, leaving individuals unjustifiably disadvantaged and/ or unnecessarily excluded. Having identified generic factors, it becomes possible to examine scope for variation; where and how there are limitations to what can be distributed. The functions and processes formed around the distribution of social or welfare goods do not all occur in the public sector. To carry out distribution can require processes and relationship networks that span institutions and sectors. Finally, consideration is given to the wider application of the approach described and challenges for social policy.

Deconstructing processes

Distributive processes

We start by defining a theoretical 'ideal model' of a distributive process. This is not to suggest all social processes are distributive, or that social inclusion hinges solely on access to distributive processes. The purpose of theorising such a model is to provide a benchmark against which to compare and analyse variations.

From section 1 of this thesis, it became possible to begin to identify the stages of processes, the functions and roles implied and the errors that can inadvertently occur in designing or enacting processes. It is self-evident that there must be a process through which distribution occurs, if it is not to be entirely random. There must be a 'good' that can be distributed and criteria, even if informal and subconscious, for its distribution. 'Just' criteria are those according with the purpose or social meaning of the good (chapter 2). Goods are of different types – welfare goods often take the form of services. Some goods are logically scarce, sometimes scarcity is constructed but is not inevitable (e.g. to increase value). Goods may have different meanings and values in different socio-cultural contexts. Some, like self-respect, are 'intangible'. Thus not all goods can be straightforwardly distributed and it may be more useful to conceive of some as qualities of interaction. However, there may also be qualities symbolically associated with a good, i.e. possession communicates something about the qualities of the owner.

To devise appropriate criteria, recognition is required of the ways in which the purpose of a good may be achieved. Recognition is also required of people's ability to meet criteria. Chapter 4 highlighted the importance of 'indicators' of identity and how these can be used as a basis for social categorisation. It became clear that indicators of identity or capacity to meet criteria, are not derived from physical appearance alone. They may also be indicated through behaviour and material possessions. As with goods, the meanings and values of indicators are culturally determined and not all cultures will understand them in the same way. Goods and indicators can – indeed must - operate at a symbolic as well as a practical level.

Distribution is not necessarily a one-off process. One process may lead into another. The notions of primary and dominant goods (Rawls 1973; Walzer 1983) suggest that certain goods can be used to acquire others¹. Some sorts of good may be consumed by the recipient and go no further, or be invested for later use. It may be that goods as much as processes are 'instrumental' to use Sen's (2000) terminology: some goods are instrumental to the acquisition of others.

In addition to questions about the process of distribution, there are important issues concerning what should be distributed, and how much of it (chapter 3). Yet, because concepts of standards of living and the goods and ‘customary activities’ required to achieve them are likely to vary depending on socio-cultural context, demography, etc, and because minima are politically as much as scientifically constructed, to attempt to achieve consensus about them can become an interminable quest. A more fruitful approach to achieving much the same objectives may be to focus on process rather than outcome; find ways to open up access to distributive processes, identify and remove barriers, and empower end-users to shape the goods and services they receive. Thus, wherever possible, end-users are empowered to define what is required to meet living standards and to attain them.

According to Sennett (cited in chapter 5),

“At least three elements are necessary for people to practice social inclusion. There must be mutual exchange; the exchange must involve elements of ritual; and the ritual must generate witnesses who serve as judges of the behaviour of individuals” (2000, p279).

This signals that inclusion hinges on some form of ritualized transaction. Sennett’s remark points to the need for different functions or roles to be performed for inclusion to be achieved.

For ‘procedural justice’ (chapter 2), for a process to run smoothly and consistently and for its outcomes to meet objectives effectively, criteria need to reflect the purpose of the good. Indicators need to be appropriate and reliable, assessors need to have the skills to assess effectively, and products or services need to meet recipients’ requirements. Therefore, there needs to be consideration beforehand of the social meaning of the good and the objectives of the process, how the process is to be operationalised and adherence to it promoted.

Social meanings, purposes and objectives

The first step to devising a procedurally just process requires clarification of the social meaning of the good. But what is meant by ‘social meaning’? It suggests a society-wide consensus about the value of the good and its purpose. While such consensus may not be impossible, it is far from inevitable in a society comprised of different levels, spheres, and social and cultural categories. It is also the case, as will be discussed, that the process of distribution can require the co-operation and participation of many differently placed actors,

each potentially with differing objectives. The challenge to establishing consensus and thence of demonstrating the justice of the process appears substantial. To be overly prescriptive risks promoting exclusion; to be unclear risks procedural injustice and poor targeting.

Instead of striving for consensus, if diversity is to be included it is the compatibility of social meanings, purposes and objectives that may be at issue. In keeping with the notion of widening the mainstream, there is nothing to say that social meaning must be narrow. Neither does it follow that the form the good takes has to be rigidly defined. Indeed, if the social purpose of a good is to promote empowerment, to do so might be inherently counter-productive: power to define the good received may be what empowerment is about. Moreover, it is most unlikely that the precise social meaning of a good can be rigidly defined and controlled. In particular, its symbolic content will depend on socio-cultural context, fluctuate over time subject to changing fashion, etc. Yet while a good's basic social meaning can be broad, allowing scope for diverse applications, it must be unambiguous, if a coherent process is to be feasible.

Meanings, purposes and objectives can differ according to societal level. Macro-level distributors (e.g. national politicians) need to establish why they are distributing the good and what they hope to achieve through it. Distribution may have macro-level social purposes, e.g. to achieve greater social equality, or promote economic growth. Macro-level objectives for distribution might therefore be a shift in status (cultural, economic, etc), behaviour or the capacity of designated social categories. At a meso-level (e.g. regional or local delivery institution), the social meaning of the good and the acceptance of its purpose and objectives may be subverted by institutional culture, customary and unquestioned practices, or objectives to meet delivery targets within limited resources. At a micro-level, actual and prospective recipients from different socio-cultural backgrounds or social categories located in different settings may attribute different social meanings to the same good and/ or see its purpose differently. Objectives for participating, avoiding participation, or constraints on participation, may also be very different. Moreover, it is not just between levels that differences can arise, but between actors at the same levels, e.g. politicians operating at a macro-level.

At each level, as well as between levels, there may be multiple objectives and interpretations. Sometimes these will be conflicting, sometimes compatible. They may not be consciously

realized and explicitly declared. Clearly, a process which requires co-ordinated action at different levels, and the co-operation of a range of actors, needs to take this into account, if its overall objective is to be achieved. It also needs to take on board the constraints upon each, even where objectives are shared. For example, government may wish to reduce the gap between the employment rates of disabled and non-disabled people. A private sector employer may fully support this in principle, but (rightly or wrongly) fear the impact on profit margins. Disabled people may wish to work, but find themselves confronted by barriers beyond their power to remove, such as inaccessible premises or transport.

On this occasion the macro-level objective is to maximize the inclusion of diversity on the basis of empowerment rather than the oppression of difference. While the social meaning of welfare goods can be debated, it is proposed that their primary purpose is to build and sustain capacity to facilitate participation in wider distributive processes, i.e. that from the perspective of the user they serve as primary or dominant goods, instrumental in opening up access to others. Alternative meanings include to support the economy, to express social solidarity, to prevent and alleviate material hardship. All of these may be compatible – up to a point. It is far from inevitable that welfare provision will live up to an ‘instrumental’ meaning or fulfil the purposes envisaged. The precise way in which it is designed (or ‘framed’) and delivered is critical. It is also worth noting that particular welfare goods – social security benefits, education, health-care, public housing – each have social meanings, all compatible with the proposed overarching definition. Education stands out: whereas to have recourse to the others has negative connotations, to be educated conveys something positive about status. The others respond to lack of capacity of one sort or another; those with more capacity attract more education.

To meet the macro-level objective and ensure consistency (within the limitations discussed) with the social meaning of welfare goods as described, it is necessary to consider the implications for the distributive process. Firstly, though, it is helpful to set out an ideal model of a distributive process. It then becomes possible to identify how this could be engineered to meet goals.

Functions and roles

For a distributive process to occur, it is possible to identify various functions that need to be performed by people placed in different roles. Burchardt *et al.* (1999) have suggested that

functions can be split into financing provision, making decisions about who should get what, and delivery. Although these certainly are core functions, it is proposed that decision-making and delivery in particular are comprised of rather more than the headline suggests. Each can be dissected into a series of sub-functions. Furthermore, there are functions not adequately encapsulated by any of those three.

As was suggested in both social justice and social exclusion literature, there is first a need to define "...a bounded society with a determinate membership, forming a universe of distribution" (Miller 2001, p4). In an era of globalization, anyone could be a prospective recipient, or factors like nationality, or habitual place of residence, might constitute an initial threshold to a 'universe of distribution'. Once status within this has been established, to access a good or service then requires prospective recipients to demonstrate that they meet the access criteria which exist to distinguish between members of the universe of distribution. Assessment of whatever is presented occurs and the good is allocated or withheld accordingly.

Formal processes are typically framed² by 'macro-actors' (Mouzelis 1991), operating in institutions at different, if inter-related, societal levels. As observed in chapter 2, and flagged in chapter 6, supranational, national, regional and local institutions all can play distributive roles. The broad parameters of the process are commonly set by superior level organizations; they then progressively narrow, and room for manoeuvre diminishes, as it descends. For example, framers at European Union level may set parameters within which nation-state level framers then must operate; they do likewise for framers at regional level, and so on. Framers clarify the social meanings and purposes of the goods to be distributed, identify objectives and design the process to meet them. They determine the criteria for access (the 'terms of inclusion' and the social category of recipients), the indicators to be used in assessing whether those criteria are met, who is to make the assessment and make decisions, the nature of the goods to be distributed, and how they are to be delivered.

Often, the policy framework is set at one level, then delegated to another (with or without some residual policymaking responsibility) to be operationalised. The distributional policy devised by the framers is then implemented by administrators. They act as gatekeepers to resources, assessing prospective recipients against the criteria for access devised by the framers, making decisions on distribution and delivering the goods accordingly. Institutions can encompass a range of functions, including assessment, administration and delivery. It is

in these 'meso-level' intermediary institutions that the interface between macro-level policy and micro-level actors occurs, mediated by meso-level administrators.

Prospective recipients may be required to demonstrate qualities such as need and desert (the two not infrequently going together), that they have potential to gain (in socially approved ways) from the good received, and/ or that to distribute to them would reduce rather than increase any threat to wider society and its norms. Assessing such qualities can be far from straightforward. Other forms of criteria, such as having insufficient funds to manage without support, or having sufficient funds to pay for support, may be more straightforward (although definitions of 'insufficient funds to manage' are likely to be heavily contested - see chapter 3). Generally, the aim is to determine the social category of prospective recipients against the blueprint handed down by framers.

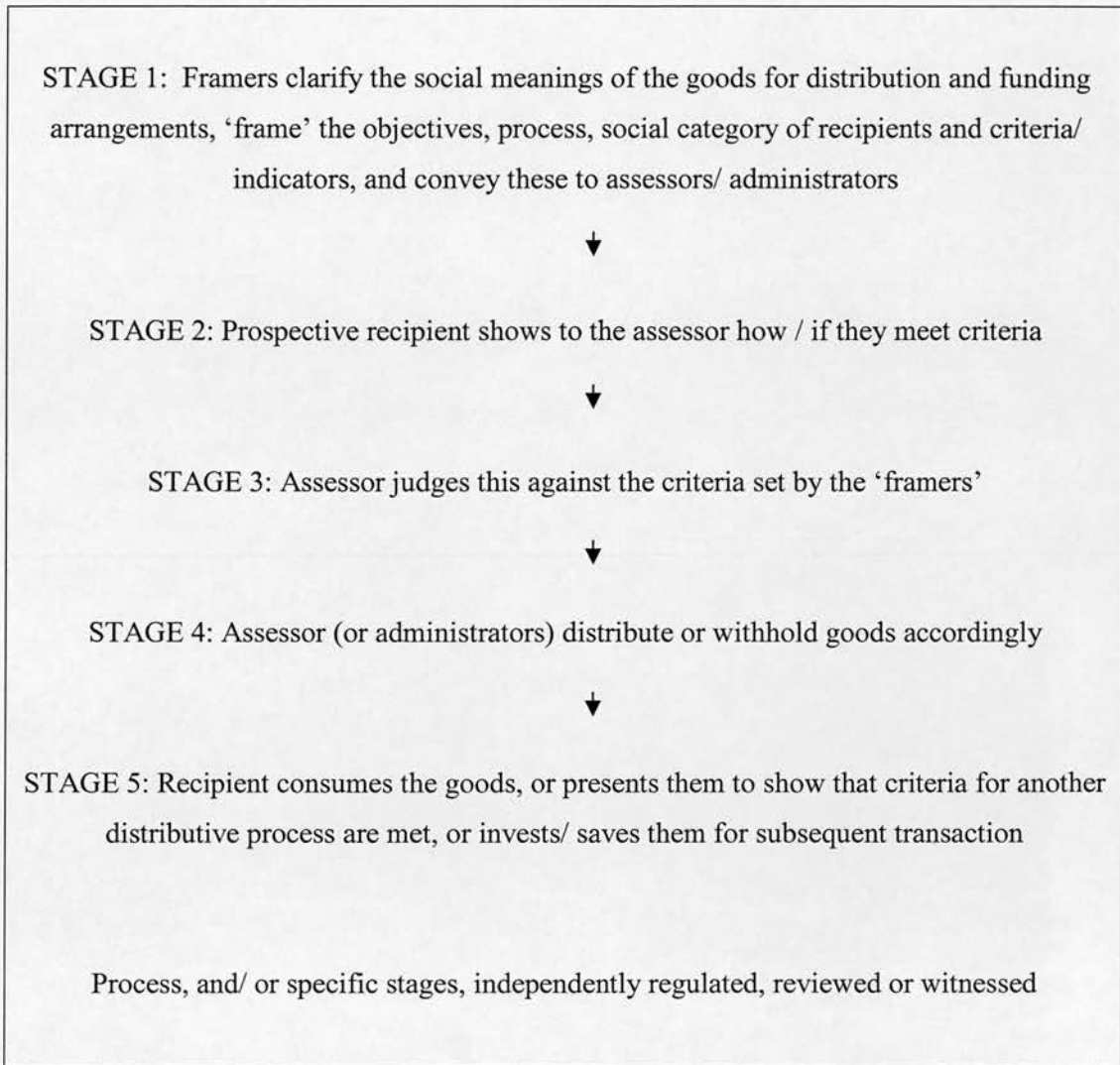
To ensure adherence to the process, 'witnesses' (Sennett 2000) are likely to be independent institutions or roles within the distributing institution itself responsible for ensuring the quality of operations, the consistency of processes and the extent to which objectives for them are met. This may occur at any stage of a process, or throughout.

An 'ideal' model of a distributive process

It thus becomes possible to discern distinct stages to distributive processes, and to associate stages and functions with particular roles and tasks. From this arises the need for relationships between people in different roles.

An 'ideal model' of a distributive process could be summarised as follows:

Table 3: Stages, functions and roles of a distributive process



Complexities in functions and roles

Even where the process described is formal and regulated, it does not follow that roles will always be distinct. Functions may be discrete, carried out by different parties, or combined into a given role. Framing may be tight or loose, imposed ‘top-down’ or devolved. It is not impossible for recipients or administrators to have an input to framing the policy or to designing the product to be delivered. Furthermore, in situations of mutual exchange, recipients will also be administrators and vice versa. Each wants the resources that the other possesses and the exchange of resources is contingent on each assessing the others’ resources (see Rhodes 1981 on ‘power dependences’).

Power does not have to diminish down the stages. Recipients may be able to hold administrators to account where their decisions on distribution are based on transparent procedures and criteria and where there is effective legal redress. The extent to which framers can hold administrators to account also varies. The relationship between policy and delivery can be far from clear-cut. Some argue that policy is only formed at the point of delivery, rather than through decision-making processes prior to it. Administrators may modify (or reframe) the policy intentions of the 'framers' as they seek to cope with the front-line pressures upon them (Lipsky 1980). They may also over-ride criteria and decisions on how they are to be assessed by applying, inadvertently or otherwise, other socio-cultural interpretations of indicators.

At one extreme, centralised control combines framing and regulating roles, locating all the power to frame and hold others accountable with an elite few. This raises the question of whether inclusion in a process is an adequate goal. It is possible for recipients to be both included and powerless. Yet, depending on how and by whom the process is framed, they could have power to hold others to account, and play a key role in designing what they receive. This would be consistent with an aim of maximising the inclusion of diversity on a basis of empowerment. Moreover, it acknowledges that a standardised good may fail to meet the needs or wants of diverse recipients. To increase both empowerment and appropriateness it follows that involving recipients in 'framing' the goods they receive should be beneficial. Furthermore, they may not just have different requirements of the 'good', but different expectations about, and requirements of, the distributive process. The manner of delivery therefore also requires consideration to maximise flexibility. Where there are limitations to flexibility (explored below), the challenge is to communicate these effectively to guide expectations.

Implications – capacity-building, simple process/ complex good

The implications for inclusion and empowerment appear complex and possibly contradictory. In some cases to combine functions into a role appears detrimental, while not in others. Yet the principle is clear. The aim is to devolve power to recipients to contribute towards framing and to hold others to account, and to empower them by clarifying and communicating benchmarks. However, this presupposes that recipients have the capacity to exercise power. To hand over responsibility without support may be highly disempowering. So too could be providing support in the wrong way (see discussion of the medical model,

chapter 4). This signals the existence of another ‘function’ necessary for inclusive distributive processes – providing appropriate support within the process. What ‘appropriate’ means in this context, and who should provide it, requires further debate. However, if users are to have confidence that support is for their benefit it needs to be independent of service providers and other parties potentially with a vested interest.

Contradictory implications are discernible regarding the degree of rigidity appropriate to the process. To ensure fairness - equitable treatment of people with the same characteristics and circumstances – there need to be clearly defined criteria for categorisation and the process needs to be transparently communicated and consistently implemented. Yet, to maximise the inclusion of diversity points towards a looser, more flexible approach. Aligned to this is the dilemma posed by the complexity arising through engaging with and reflecting diversity. It suggests goods need to be highly variable to reflect diverse understandings, needs and preferences. Given an underlying importance of ensuring the process matches the good, at one extreme a ‘simple’ standardised good – where there is a narrow yet widely-held consensus about social meaning – might be expected to give rise to a simple process with few criteria for categorisation of recipients and a straightforward assessment process. By the same token, a ‘complex’ good might logically engender a complex process with many variations in what is delivered, reflecting differences in characteristics or circumstances, multiple categories and indicators for assessment.

Child Benefit could be considered an example of a simple good and process. Yet it has long been vulnerable to challenge on the grounds that criteria are too minimal and the category of recipients too broad, so that it goes to people who do not need it. Furthermore, no effort is made by distributors to assess whether recipients use it in ways consistent with the purpose of the good, i.e. spend it on their children. The social meaning of ‘support for children’ is broadly uncontentious. Disputes centre on how the need for support is to be demonstrated (does having caring responsibility for a child inevitably require it?) and the consequences of providing support where it is not needed, i.e. if the meaning and purpose of the good is not respected.

Overall, the challenge appears to be to find ways of simplifying assessment and delivery without standardising the good to be delivered - or standardising it in such a way that it allows for multiple applications by diverse recipients - while ensuring that the social

meaning and purpose of the good is respected. It remains to be seen how and if this circle can be squared.

Currencies

Distinguishing currencies and goods

It has been suggested that the 'good' acquired through one distributive process might then be used in another distributive process to acquire other goods. If so, it means that goods can perform different roles. They can be the output of a process, or they can be the subject of assessment for access to another: an end or a means to an end (or both, shifting over time). In a market setting, money is the obvious currency used to purchase a good. A good may then be exchanged for another, or sold, i.e. converted back into money. With regard to goods accessed through social rights the sort (or sorts) of 'currency' required appears more complex. For reasons which will hopefully become clear, it is proposed to use the term 'currency' to refer to whatever is presented for assessment (the means) and 'goods' to refer to whatever is to be distributed (the end). Therefore, for the purposes of this thesis, these terms are to be understood not as representing different and distinct types of entity, but rather entities at different stages of the distributive process.

As previously observed (chapter 2): "The idea of distributive justice has as much to do with being and doing as with having..." (Walzer 1983, p3). It follows that criteria for access to distributive processes may not just be concerned with what a person has, but with what they do and what they are – or appear to be: "It is now the appearances which matter alone; they matter for their own sake. (Bauman 2000, p75). Yet, there is more to appearance than possessions or clothing. As Derrida contends, the superficial appearance of everything is 'text' – a vehicle for understanding. Burr (1995) affirms that anything can be 'read' for meaning and is thus textual. For example, buildings 'speak' of civic pride or a yearning for the past, clothes and uniforms indicate class status, gender, age or sub-culture.

If criteria can require the assessment of 'being, doing and having', the question is how these are to be translated into tangible, measurable 'currency'. Another way of phrasing it would be to ask how to establish reliable indicators of 'being, doing and having'. Where 'having' refers to material possessions the challenge may be more straightforward, although the socio-

cultural context will still be significant. A given material possession may have different meanings or values in different contexts. Some might go further to suggest that identity is determined by possessions, rather than possessions merely indicating identity: “You *are* what you can show to possess, what you wear and what others see you consuming” (Bauman 2000, p75).

As seen in chapter 4, identity can also be construed as ‘performative’, defined by behaviour. In distributive relationships, indicators of behaviour may be required in situations where access depends on past performance or prediction of future behaviour. Indeed, behaviour has become the focus for distinguishing ‘deserving’ from ‘undeserving’ poor. Responses to poverty aim at “...dividing the poor into ‘deserving’ and ‘undeserving’ groups based on a moral economy of conduct” (Powell 1995, p29; also discussion of the ‘underclass’, chapter 5). To translate behaviour into reliable, tangible ‘currency’ is not straightforward. There may be constraints on the time available for assessment. To observe behaviour over an extended period may be unrealistic. Instead it may be necessary to rely on written records, verbal testimonials, or objects created or received. The designation of roles is an important predictor of behaviour whether in the work-place (manager, secretary, etc) or outside (mother, carer, etc). Behavioural ‘currency’ might take the form of references, education certificates, criminal records, awards - and material possessions. This begins to suggest that ‘currency’ of one type can be indicative of another.

If both material possessions (having) and behaviours (doing) can be construed as determining or being indicative of identity, together they may well constitute or be indicative of ‘being’. However, again referring back to chapter 4, it is evident that physical personal appearance irrespective of material possessions or behaviours plays a major role in signalling identity. Indicators of physical characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, physical or mental capacity, sexual orientation, or age, are of major importance to social categorisation. Whereas material possessions and behaviours can be important indicators of physical characteristics and will contribute to appearance, they are not the whole story. For example, an elderly person will be understood as such by physical indicators like grey hair, wrinkled skin, posture and mobility, irrespective of what s/he wears, possesses or does. Physical personal appearance therefore becomes a third type of currency. It does not follow, though, that physical personal appearance is a reliable indicator. People may have hidden disabilities, cosmetic surgery may obscure age, and so on.

Physical appearance indicators are commonly used to predict behaviour, again with varying degrees of accuracy. It can reasonably be argued that an elderly person will, in all probability, dress and behave in certain ways. Assumptions may be made that a person who is female and of child-bearing age will take time off work to have a baby. Similarly, a person who appears Asian might be presumed to be Muslim. A (visibly) physically disabled person may be assumed to be housebound. Physical appearance 'currency' can also act as a proxy for material possessions. A (visibly) disabled person might be assumed to be poor. Conversely, the possession of an expensive house could be taken to indicate the owner has a well-paid or highly skilled job. It would be unsurprising if they also had an expensive car – material possessions can indicate the probability of others. Subject to other contextual factors and associated probabilities, it may be expected that the owner is white, non-disabled, middle-aged or older, part of a couple, etc.

Context, whether defined geographically, socio-culturally or in terms of activity (work, home, school, hospital) will be of critical importance in understanding identity. The identity of a surgeon in a hospital may be differently expressed and understood to her/ his identity in the local pub (hopefully!). Depending on context, different indicators may be relevant and indicators may have different meanings. Some have argued that context, as discourse, is what creates identity (chapter 4). Socio-culturally derived norms, perhaps supported by quantitative research describing averages and probabilities, describe likely combinations of characteristics, behaviours and levels of material resources. These serve as devices for 'placing' people within their context. None of this is to say that indicators are reliable or understandings accurate.

This raises the question of the purpose of currencies and goods, above and beyond the satiation of needs and wants. We are entering the realms of symbolism, where material possessions and behaviours become conflated with physical appearance and any or all are taken to be the person's identity. In other words, currencies are both tangible, material manifestations and symbolic indicators at the same time. They convey information - and misinformation - about identity, such as experience, knowledge, power, status and health. They may also be taken as indicators of such concepts as well-being, power, nurturing, belief or entertainment.

Much as it may be the source of misinformation, the symbolic content of indicators is unavoidable. Reflecting back on earlier discussion regarding types of good (chapter 2), it

becomes clear that intangible goods such as power, honour, divine grace (Walzer 1983) must by their very nature be symbolically communicated and understood. As previously flagged, for practical reasons a rapid assessment may be required. To suggest that identity can ever be accurately assessed would be subject to challenge. Identity and its indicators are not immutable, as discussed. However, to enhance awareness of unfounded assumptions, to examine the relevance and reliability of indicators with regard to the particular context or purpose in hand may be helpful in reducing 'process error'.

It remains to be seen if the three forms of currency can also serve as goods, i.e. as the output of a distributive process, rather than as the means to that end. Goods such as food, clothing and property clearly can be outputs. So too can education, jobs and health-care services. However, unlike food, clothing and property, they are not tangible material possessions. Instead, their realization is intrinsically performative. If goods (as outputs) can involve either 'having' or 'doing', it is less clear how 'being' as indicated by personal physical appearance can be an output of a distributive process, with the possible exception of cosmetic surgery. While they are not literally acquired through distributive processes, the meanings and values of personal characteristics are nonetheless construed through the 'dialogical relations' (Taylor 1992) necessitated by engagement, or attempts to engage.

If currencies and goods are not neatly interchangeable it follows that not all goods acquired can be re-used in a subsequent distributive process and not all currencies required can straightforwardly be acquired through distributive processes. Certainly, material goods may be consumed rather than re-used. Currencies presented are not always literally exchanged for a good, and so are not re-usable as currency. Currency received by administrators which takes material form may be reusable. Where it takes the form of the demonstration of behaviour, or assessment of personal characteristics, nothing is literally exchanged and there is nothing tangible to re-use. To demonstrate particular behaviours may be necessary to access a good, but they go no further. Goods such as health-care services and education must be consumed, or become 'embodied' in the recipient to use Bourdieu's terminology (1997). They leave the recipient better resourced and increase the chances of success in subsequent distributions, potentially translating into positive behavioural currency. This implies that distributive and redistributive processes and relationships can entail more than straightforward, literal exchanges.

Capital

The notion of different forms of currency is consistent with distinctions drawn by economists (e.g. Becker 1964) and sociologists between forms of capital. Bourdieu defines capital as 'accumulated labor' in its materialized form or as taking embodied form which "...declines and dies with its bearer (with his biological capacity, his memory, etc)" (1997, p49). Capital comes in three guises:

"...as *economic capital*, which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights; as *cultural capital*, which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of educational qualifications; and as *social capital*, made up of social obligations ('connections'), which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of a title of nobility" (1997, p47).

Although Bourdieu's categories of capital and the types of currency discussed above are not identically conceived, to operationalise capital of any sort requires it to be expressed: "...capital is first an abstract concept and must be given a fixed, tangible form to be useful" (de Soto 2001, p40). Whether or not fixed and tangible, it is hard to see how else it could be expressed than through the 'currencies' proposed here, i.e. material possessions/ objects, behaviours and personal appearance.

As is consistent with discussion above, Bourdieu acknowledges that some goods are symbolic and require 'institutionalizing' or objectifying (i.e. transformed into currency) to be understood and that not all goods are directly and instantaneously convertible into economically quantifiable currency. For example, cultural capital is objectified by material objects and media, like writings, paintings, monuments and instruments. Academic qualifications 'institutionalize' cultural capital and 'impose recognition' of it. It could be argued that relationships are 'objectified' or reified through legally binding contracts. Rights are one obvious manifestation. As with educational qualifications, contracts 'impose recognition'. They also constrain or direct action. Thus, marriage rituals and certificates could be said to 'objectify' and impose recognition of a partnership.

Underlining the importance of participation in social networks, Bourdieu's description of social capital suggests that this is particularly important for inclusion:

“...the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition...to membership in a group” (1997, p51).

Relationships are maintained and reinforced by material and symbolic exchanges, and these are the basis of the solidarity which makes possible “...material profits, such as all the types of services accruing from useful relationships, and symbolic profits, such as those derived from association with a rare, prestigious group” (1997, p52). Furthermore, “The social capital possessed by a person depends on the size of the network and the volume of capital of different kinds possessed by those forming part of those networks” (1997, p52). Referring to Granovetter’s description of strong and weak tie bridges to other networks, it could be argued that social capital is comprised of both types.

Consistent with the proposal above, ‘a continuous series of exchanges’ is required in which “...recognition is endlessly affirmed and reaffirmed” (1997, p52). Recognition (and misrecognition) may refer to currencies and goods, but ultimately to (mis)recognition of the identities of the players involved in the transaction. The act of exchange (whether or not literal) symbolically conveys recognition – another way in which distribution and recognition are interconnected. There are obvious echoes of discussion about solidarity in chapter 5, and particularly of Perri 6’s (1997) work on the importance of social networks. It is not just that social relationships have immediate ‘constitutive’ importance (Sen 2000) in preventing isolation, the mere existence of prestigious social contacts can be ‘instrumental’ in opening up access to fresh opportunities to transact. They serve as indicators of the worth, competence, values and behaviours of the transactor. As the network expands, so the social capital of those newly part of it is enhanced through association. However, as with any ‘positional good’ (Williams 1969), logical limits apply. If everyone is best friends with the Prime Minister, the social capital such a relationship implies is logically diminished.

Implications for social policy

To make accurate assessments, it may be necessary to adjust the indicators used and the way in which they are interpreted. Training is likely to be important for administrators, to raise awareness of assumptions and alternative explanations. There needs to be an awareness of symbolic content and a readiness to question it, if assessments are to be ‘culturally sensitive’. Creative exploration of alternative ways of conveying information about particular qualities might open up access, while remaining faithful to the purpose of the good. However, there will be limitations to the reliability and variability of indicators. The identification of reliable

behavioural currency is likely to prove problematic, particularly in view of the time constraints under which administrators generally operate.

The discussion of capital suggests a number of ways in which prospective recipients might have their capacity increased. It is not just a matter of increasing income. While education and training are the main responses of welfare provision to increasing cultural capital, it is hard to identify welfare policy that aims to increase social capital. This is worthy of further exploration.

Distributive institutions

There are three major institutions for distributing goods: the state and the market in the first instance, and the family thereafter. It is not necessarily the case that state and market distributive processes are clearly distinguishable. Just taking the three functions of financing, decision-making and delivery (let alone other functions of framing, regulating and supporting) results in eight different possible combinations of public/ private roles. (Burchardt *et al.* 1999). For example, provision may be publicly funded, with decisions taken by statutory sector employees, but it is delivered by private sector organisations. The three functions may all be contained within statutory organisations, or be carried out by individuals and private sector bodies. For example, individuals may fund services privately, decide what service they want and select from potential private sector providers. In effect, this means that different roles and parts of the process can be carried out by different institutions in different sectors, or by individuals.

It is noticeable that funding and framing typically go together, i.e. whoever controls the funds that pay for the good or service generally has the power to define it, or at least to make choices over what is delivered and by whom. Publicly funded provision has traditionally been designed (or framed) by elected politicians and delivered by statutory sector organisations. Individuals privately purchasing goods and services are able to choose from products and providers competing in the marketplace and, through being able to choose one over another, are enabled to exert pressure on private sector framers.

Traditionally, advantages and disadvantages have been associated with both state and private provision (see Glennerster 1997). State provision has been seen as lending itself to standardisation, in terms of quality, equity and universality – designed to deliver what Forbes

(2002) might term 'the modernist account of equality of opportunity' comprised of principles of universalism, consensus and material equality. Disadvantages have included the poor fit between standardised provision and client diversity, with flexibility generally over-ruled in favour of equity. There was a lack of choice in what was in effect a monopoly supplier for those unable to afford market alternatives. The lack of competition and profit-motive removed incentives for efficiency. The extensive bureaucracies engendered were slow to respond to change and there were difficulties in ensuring that services were run for the benefit of clients rather than that of the staff providing them.

In contrast, market provision has been seen as offering a choice of suppliers who are consequently obliged to compete. To succeed necessitates innovation, efficiency and flexibility to ever better match products to customer requirements, at the least cost to the company. However, there is the obvious problem that to access market goods and services requires that a person has money (and, in the case of insurance, be a low risk) so that profits can be made. Clearly, people without money (or at high risk) may both have the greatest needs and be least able to meet them through the market. It follows that there are some forms of goods and services that cannot be provided by the market to some people because to do so will never be profitable. Other disadvantages include the difficulty of acquiring accurate information (and understanding it) in order to be able to compare, sometimes highly complex products such as private pensions (chapter 6).

Combining public and private sectors

When it comes to maximizing the inclusion of diversity and empowering recipients, market principles of choice and variety, and the predominant importance of matching products to customer requirements, clearly have much to recommend them. Yet principles of targeting resources on needs rather than according to ability to pay, and equitable treatment (if processes are to be consistent) are just as important. Given the advantages and disadvantages to each, it is unsurprising that there has been a history of attempts to achieve the best of both worlds (see Glennerster 1997). This has encompassed 'quasi-market', notably the introduction of purchaser/ provider splits in health services, exploration of the use of vouchers, arrangements for funding to follow patients or students, compulsory competitive tendering and the Private Finance Initiative. Whether these have really done much to increase user choice, improve efficiency and quality, and better match provision to needs, whether the covert aim has in fact been to reduce public expenditure, are matters for debate.

However, as will be explored, there may be other, possibly better, ways to achieve such objectives.

Processes and relationships in private and public sectors

It would be impossible comprehensively to track all the feasible permutations to distributive processes and associated relationships: the following only hints at the potential complexities. Nonetheless, it provides a steer for analysis and a starting point for hypothesizing how functions, processes and relationships can be engineered and enacted to be inclusive and empowering of diverse recipients.

Without being over-prescriptive, it is possible to infer the relationships likely to be required to carry out functions and processes. Within private sector manufacturing environments internal relationships exist between workers, managers, shareholders, etc. External relationships need to be forged with distributors, retailers, and with actual and prospective customers. Relationships between framer and customer take the form of communication (framer to customer) through such means as advertising, market research and purchasing decisions (customer to framer). Whether or not through organised collective action to boycott a product or the accumulative outcome of independent purchasing decisions, customers are able to exert pressure on framers – so long as a monopoly does not exist.

Within policymaking environments, internal relations exist between departments, front and back-benchers, political Parties, politicians and officials. Relations with the distributors of social policy may be set at differing distances. ‘Next Steps Agencies’ like the Child Support Agency and the Benefits Agency (now Jobcentre Plus) are just one small (arguably imperceptible) step removed (both of these are structurally part of the Department for Work and Pensions). Local government, private or voluntary sector deliverers are further away. Politicians’ communications to service users tend to occur through Party political broadcasts, manifestos and so on, covering proposals on social policy matters among many others. Between elections, consultation documents are the principal vehicle for two-way communication. The media plays an important intermediary role by delivering, challenging and analysing political messages. Users’ ability to influence policy direction is minimal – via elections every 4-5 years, although they may, of course, lobby their MPs in the meantime. Organisations working with and for users may also lobby for policy change, respond to consultation documents on proposed policy changes, etc. Overall, democracy as currently

enacted provides a somewhat crude basis for relationships between political framers and the users of public provision; it is a clumsy, imprecise means of communication. As with market provision, to exert pressure on framers to instigate or rethink changes can require collective or cumulative action.

To implement the 'ideal model' of a distributive process reveals a number of subsidiary functions.. Distribution necessitates assessment, administration of various sorts, monitoring of quality and quantities of goods/ services available for distribution, delivery to the user/ customer, appointments systems and so on. Within distributing organisations, these are likely to be carried out by people in different roles, such as managers, specialists, front-line staff, etc. This broadly holds true for private retail outlets, agencies and statutory providers. There will be internal relationships between bureaucrats charged with distribution, relationships with framers which may be internal (within the same institution) or external (in another 'higher level' institution) and external relationships with customers or users. This might be broadly characterised as 'strong tie' networks (internal) and 'weak tie' networks (external). For private sector commercial companies and the distributors of statutory welfare goods and services the critical relationship is with prospective customers or claimants/users respectively (i.e. external, 'weak tie'). Although objectives differ markedly (to make a profit; to prevent/ redress disadvantage) both are concerned to attract or target particular social categories.

The recipient may have 'internal' relationships with her/ his family or household, peer or other groups and social networks founded on shared characteristics, where membership boundaries are discernible. Relationships may be external, with past or future assessors and administrators (where receipt leads to engagement in another distributive process) or, potentially, with strangers and unknown groupings.

Goods and services signal their participation in current processes and relationships and set the scene for future participation. Notwithstanding the unreliability of any connection between receipt and future participation (see Sen's capability theory discussed in chapter 3), the successful completion of a distributive process, particularly where demonstrated by tangible evidence, becomes symbolic of the qualities of the possessor. To achieve the good in question communicates something about their identity – whether negative or positive – enabling or inhibiting the formation of new relationships.

Distribution does not necessarily stop when it gets to family/ household level – there may be transactions between members. Once at this level, though, many institutional constraints are removed. In the private sphere, social relations become less formalised. The process of distribution too becomes informal, based on individual preferences or household norms. If a process with criteria exists, it may be subconscious or specific to a particular household. This naturally assumes that the society in question is not authoritarian, invading the private sphere, coercing individuals to behave in specified ways. However, even in a liberal society there will be legal parameters to the freedoms within the private sphere, as well as indirect (though nonetheless powerful) socio-cultural pressures to conform.

Currencies and distributive institutions

The currencies required to access goods via public and private sector organisations are clearly of different types. Rights form the route to accessing statutory goods and services. Generally the emphasis for realising social rights is on demonstrating need and/ or desert. Nonetheless, it is striking how varied are the currencies required to access different forms of state welfare provision (social security, education, health, housing). To access social security alone can depend on demonstrating all three types: income and savings levels (material possessions); National Insurance Contribution record, jobseeking activity, or childcare responsibility (behaviours); age, nationality, or degree of disability (personal characteristics).

In contrast, to access goods via the marketplace generally requires only that a person has enough money to buy them. Judgements about the identity of the prospective purchaser are usually irrelevant, with the principal exceptions of insurance cover, and the sale of goods like alcohol or cigarettes where age restrictions apply. To assess risk, companies may have recourse to a wide range of currencies not dissimilar to those required for accessing social security. Of course, a key difference is that for benefits a person may have to demonstrate insufficient funds and incapacity, whereas for insurance they will have to demonstrate sufficiency and capacity. It thus appears that for state support ‘negative’ currency can be the route to access. Yet, alongside, there remains a requirement to demonstrate deservingness, in the form of approved behaviours. In general terms, where there is no need to take account of a person’s identity beyond the contents of their wallet, assessment simply takes the form of adding up the cash to see if there is enough, and desert is not an issue. It is vastly more complex in other situations, notably assessment for goods accessed via social rights.

When it comes to distribution via the third form of distributive institution, namely the family, very different considerations apply. Although identities will be understood through currencies, assessment or judgement may be suspended, being secondary to the relationship. Desert is largely confirmed by the fact of family membership and socio-cultural expectations around roles. There are other examples to be found of situations where distribution is not primarily contingent upon assessment of currencies, but is instead governed by the circumstances of a person's birth into an ethnic grouping or within a nation-state (irrespective of personal appearance indicators), i.e. where relationships are of the social 'ideal-type'.

The importance of effective relationships

This starts to shed light on the nature and importance of social cohesion, and how it can be strengthened by empowerment. As indicated in chapter 6, communications between levels are vital, if individuals, whatever their role, are to be 'embedded' into processes and 'attached' by relationship ties. If relationships, communications and accountability between framers and recipients are poor, framers are unlikely to understand what recipients want or need and are unable to develop a suitable good. The good received does not enhance capabilities – and may even detract from them – providing disincentives to engagement. If the producer has a monopoly or the recipient has no redress, they will continue producing inappropriate, unsatisfactory products and be none the wiser. If not a monopoly, other producers with more satisfactory products will become dominant. It is this problem which the introduction of competition into public provision has supposedly been intended to address.

If communications between framers and administrators are poor, policy developed by the former may be unworkable. It may prove impossible to deliver the good in ways consistent with the policy objective. Indicators may be unreliable or poorly selected, so the product is distributed to the 'wrong' people. If relationships between assessors and prospective recipients are poor, assessment brings risks or costs to prospective recipients, and the way a product is delivered is stigmatising, those it was intended for may not come forward. Recipients may lose social capital (status) by engaging, and consequently be less well-placed to build positive social relations elsewhere. To conclude, poor relationships and incoherent processes are the antithesis of solidarity. Connections and relationships are not 'solid'; they do not cohere. Complexity is a deterrent in itself.

If that is the problem, the challenge is how to make processes cohere and relationships 'solid'. Various strategies are possible. To take a leaf out of Nozick's book, it could be argued that coherence is assured (and just) when the producer, distributor and user are one and the same, or where the producer/ distributor decides voluntarily to distribute her/ his product to someone else (1974). This is to condemn out of hand collective social rights, collective attempts to equalise resources, or collective action in pursuit of social objectives - along with the entire premise of this thesis. It is therefore unhelpful to our purpose. However, if there is moral justice in those producing also controlling the distribution of the product of their labours (Marx made a similar point) it could explain why, if that connection is broken, questions of morality shift to establishing the legitimacy of the power of the (intervening) distributors and the 'deservingness' of the recipients.

Certainly, the direction of welfare reform has generally been towards increasing choice. Whether choices extend as far as users or stop with administrators, how real the choices are in practice and how appropriate to meeting needs, all remain very unclear. There is little evidence of the direct involvement of users in the design of goods and services or delivery mechanisms, in setting standards, or in decision-making³. Although in some cases (notably social security), they have rights to challenge decisions and to redress if decisions are proven erroneous, in other cases (e.g. community care) complaints procedures and direct feedback mechanisms can be rudimentary and poorly publicised. Moreover, as with responsibility, it may be insufficient simply to offer choice. Recipients need to be empowered to exercise it. This may mean opening up access to information and confidence and skills building. People who have never been empowered and who have received longstanding negative messages about their helplessness and incapacity are not well-placed to exercise choice. Plus, if they have played no role in formulating the choices they are presented with, those choices may be irrelevant to their needs and wants. It remains to be seen whether it is possible to have a tightly coherent process that is also flexible enough to allow for non-standardised provision, wide access, empowerment and accountability. Overall, this signals the need for a new approach - a new model beyond the free-market, traditional public sector or combinations of the two.

A universal process framework?

The starting point for developing the theoretical approach presented here was to consider the processes and associated relationships concerned with the distribution of social goods, including services. This encompasses processes and relationships occurring in other spheres with other objectives. The accountability of those responsible for framing statutory social goods and services can occur through processes and relationships in the political sphere. Social rights are a legal construct, and their enforcement may be contingent on processes and relationships in the civil sphere (if understood in terms of legal systems). It is therefore worth pausing to reflect whether the theoretical approach presented here, or elements of it, can be taken to form a universal theory, or 'ideal model' of processes and relationships.

As discussed in chapter 6, processes and relationships of one sort or another occur in different societal spheres, including economic, social, political, cultural and civil, and at different societal levels, with relationship networks the means of interconnection. Within the 'ideal model' of a distributive process, it is striking not just that levels feature, but how the five 'spheres' as functions, their values and drivers find expression. The economic sphere is evident in funding considerations such as 'value for money' and efficiency, and in the nature of relationships where links between funders and recipients are broken. Social 'solidarity' issues may be what lie behind the public sector ethos, the need for a 'support' function, and relationships within families. The cultural sphere permeates throughout, but is likely to be particularly apparent in assessments and the symbolism of goods and currencies. The political sphere relates to framing and empowerment; the civil sphere to rights, and the 'witness', audit or regulation function. In effect, our aim is to decouple the economic from the political (so that funder does not have to equal framer); move the power down to the lower level (recipient); separate social (support) from civil (policing), and redress the balance between social and economic sphere by strengthening the former.

Furthermore, it seems that the outline of key functions, roles and stages of a distributive process described could have wider application to formal relationships in other spheres. Depending on the setting, framers may be politicians, company directors, Law Lords, religious leaders, and so on. Assessors/ administrators include retailers, adjudication officers, social workers, doctors, those occupying lower level religious offices, etc. Prospective recipients, users or transactors may be customers, clients, service-users, claimants, voters, passengers, employees, supplicants, etc. Regulators might include auditors, inspectors,

judges, professional associations, etc. Considerations of systems and social integration apply, relationships may be internal to institutions or groupings at different societal levels, or they and associated processes may span levels.

Organizations will usually have corporate policies and procedures such as disciplinary and grievance, marketing strategies, etc. It may be possible to align each with aspects of the framework identified above, so that disciplinary and grievance policies are part of regulation, marketing about communication with prospective customers/ users, etc. Whatever the objective of a specific process, it will generally be a subsidiary part of, or interconnected with, others. Analysis of stages, functions, roles and relationships and inter-relationship is always likely to be relevant to understanding how processes cohere, why they breakdown and the consequent implications for inclusion.

While it could reasonably be argued that not all societal processes necessarily follow the same pattern, and may be very differently understood in different socio-cultural contexts, it seems likely that all could lend themselves to deconstruction into stages, functions and roles. For processes of any public sort to be enacted requires the formation of social relationships. It will be necessary for parties to identify each other and obtain information about particular aspects of each other's identity. For this, they will rely on indicators of varying sorts. These may be formal and explicitly 'objectified' into what has been termed here 'currencies', or they may be informal and subconscious. Currencies will be of three basic types, serving as indicators of material wealth, behaviours (including skills), and physical personal characteristics. These in turn can be understood as indicative of economic, cultural and social capital, although more than one form of currency may be required to describe capital, e.g. social capital may be deduced from a combination of all three. They can operate both at a tangible practical level and an intangible symbolic level. There is likely to be considerable cross-referencing between currencies, with one sort taken (rightly or wrongly) as indicative of others.

The more complex the process, the more susceptible to incoherence and the greater the risk of breakdown. The relationships of those charged with enacting a coherent process are likely to be under less strain. Relationships are likely to be more robust where roles are understood and occupants have the capacity to carry them out effectively. Processes need to be well 'framed', so that there is consistency between the objective and strategy for achieving it. Indicators need to be reliable and practical. To maximize the inclusion of diversity requires

that consideration is given to different ways in which criteria might be met and the variety of indicators that might serve. There needs to be clarity about which indicators are relevant and irrelevant.

It also seems likely that relationships can be broadly classified as 'internal' to those within a group and external with those in other groups. Groups may be formed around institutions, functions and processes. However, as discussed in chapter 4, there are many other bases for social categorization, not least because there are many other possible shared aspects to identity. To maximize the inclusion of diversity may entail both opening up groups to become more heterogeneous entities and forging positive relationships across groups. Alternatively, if one person is a member of a multitude of homogeneous groups, s/he creates a point of connection between them.

Limitations

Like chapter 6, during the course of chapter 7 attention has been drawn to limitations restricting room for manoeuvre when it comes to maximizing the inclusion of diversity. It is noticeable how the generic barriers created by inhospitable socio-cultural conditions once again feature. As should be expected given the subject-matter of this chapter, most concern meso-level process issues. However, one in particular has wider socio-cultural implications, expanding on points made in chapter 6 concerning the importance for empowerment of communications between levels and of communication barriers more generally preventing participation. The practical feasibility of detailed, accurate communication and accountability between remote supranational bodies and individuals 'on the ground' is questionable. Although IT developments might assist to a degree, this may point to the need to devolve to a lower level, if empowerment, accountability and engagement are the aim.

As noted in chapter 2 certain goods are logically scarce. Scarcity can also be constructed. Much as the latter implies that it is avoidable, it may be constructed in response to unavoidable pressures. For example, if shareholders demand dividends, profit must be created and the constructed scarcity of a widely desired product means higher prices will be tolerated; there may be political imperatives to cut taxes and spending, and so on.

There are limitations to the diversity that can be accommodated regarding the meaning of goods if a just process reflecting that meaning is to be devised. If too broad, the coherence between meaning and criteria becomes unsustainable. However, to err too far on the side of rigidity is as likely to be problematic, given the diversity of socio-cultural contexts, the passage of time, or the multiple settings in which a good may feature. Furthermore, it remains to be explored whether there are also limits to the extent that a simple process and assessment procedure can justly deliver complex goods, or a standardized good can be used appropriately yet diversely.

Regarding the administration of processes, time (and consequently resource) constraints limit the capacity of administrators to make assessments. There may be limitations to the reliability of indicators – particularly those relating to behaviour – given the need to translate intangible qualities into tangible, objectified forms for assessment. Similar difficulties arise from the perspective of recipients attempting to select between complex goods. The practical difficulties of conveying complex information about an institution, product or service means assessment risks being based on information which is incomplete or over-simplified to the point of inaccuracy. Time, complexity and communication barriers can all intervene to limit scope for informed choice.

To empower individuals means devolving power and responsibility to them. However, responsibility needs to be matched by capacity to exercise it. Without capacity-building and support, to offload responsibility onto ill-prepared individuals will overwhelm rather than empower. Additionally, there may be limits to choice and empowerment consequent on the dangers of ‘moral hazard’: if people with negative currencies have the same powers and choice as those with positive currencies, why go to the bother of acquiring the latter? Access to high quality goods and services, choice and flexibility are normally contingent on positive currencies. On what moral grounds should these be made available to people with negative currencies? How can the case be made to the satisfaction of tax-payers that recipients with negative currencies nonetheless are deserving of choice and empowerment?

Challenges for social policy

The theoretical approach set out in this chapter presents a number of challenges for social policy, where the aim is to maximise the inclusion of diversity on a basis of empowerment.

Much as public debate has tended to focus on the merits and demerits of public versus private provision, this is to misunderstand the problem. To locate debate within a 'public versus private sector' polemic is unduly confining. It obscures rather than illuminates the issues and dilemmas. Instead it is necessary to abstract further back to identify the processes, relationships, qualities, etc, that are required. The debate needs to be reconfigured to focus on these first and foremost.

There may be questions about the social meanings and purposes of welfare goods and the objectives for welfare provision. If there are different forms of capital, can social policy contribute to enhancing all of them? Capacity building (cultural capital) may need to take place, not just with a view to facilitating participation in future transactions, but if the recipient is to exercise choice in this one, contribute to framing, etc. If social capital is important, can policy facilitate the development of networks, both 'internal' within peer group and 'external', with other groups?

To acknowledge the diversity of prospective transactors, and the socio-cultural contexts in which they may be located, suggests that standardised goods or services are unlikely to provide a good match to needs. Yet, to respond to the complexity of identities and associated needs by complicating processes (e.g. assessment) risks a collapse into incoherence. It remains to be seen whether it is possible to have a tightly coherent process which is also flexible enough to allow for non-standardised provision. There may also be tensions between the principle of equitable treatment for people with the same circumstances and characteristics and the principle of matching provision to meet individual needs. This may reflect some of the weaknesses inherent to social categorisation. Whereas people may be divided into groups on the basis of a shared characteristics, and it may well be that all group members experience a set of barriers or needs associated with that characteristic, as previously discussed, individuals will have many other characteristics, and therefore may experience additional barriers or needs related to those. Policy needs to respond equitably to samenesses, but flexibly to differences.

If delivery mechanisms are to reflect the diversity of prospective recipients, there needs to be flexibility to vary them. Yet, there may be constraints on the resources for administration and the amount of time available for assessments. Assessors may be obliged to depend on unreliable indicators, either because of resource/ time limitations or simply because reliable

indicators do not exist. However, exploration is needed to establish whether it is possible to take action to minimise the making of inadvertent and inaccurate assumptions.

It is important to think holistically about the process and the infrastructure required if people with diverse characteristics are to participate; how a person acquires information, makes an appointment, attends the appointment, and so on. Barriers to any part of the process may arise through inaccessible transactional infrastructure. There are challenges too in terms of how to facilitate communications between framers, administrators and users. IT developments increase possible options. They may also increase administrative flexibility, reducing the need for co-presence.

It is not just a matter of deconstructing one process to identify barriers: if welfare services are instrumental in promoting wider inclusion through building ‘weak-tie’ bridges (chapter 6), it is necessary to understand objectives and processes leading to the point of interface from the perspectives of all involved, e.g. potential recipient accessing and receiving welfare services (process of access) and generators/ deliverers of those services; prospective employees and employers; students and educational institutions; consumers and commercial producers/ retailers. If connections are to be successful awareness is needed of the objectives, needs and constraints on all actors. Objectives will not necessarily be the same, but need to be compatible. The needs of one party may be met by the resources of the other, e.g. one gains in practical terms (the receiver) while the other gains in terms of ‘positive self image’ (the giver). Each may be engaged in separate processes, flowing from their particular objectives, and these need to interconnect to allow for transferral. For example, a person who is claiming benefit, unemployed and actively seeking work needs to be able to transfer from that system into work. An employer needs to be able to reach people to fill vacancies through a recruitment process. Both processes need to be considered, and both parties may need support around the point of transition. This concurs with a point made in chapter 6; that the interface between processes needs to be considered, to avoid barriers to social mobility arising.

There are significant challenges posed by the fact that access to state welfare provision often hinges on ‘negative’ currencies like lack of income or incapacity which can lead to participation becoming stigmatising. Education is the notable exception, where resources follow capacity as much as (if not more than) incapacity. This might point again to standardising or universalising provision in such a way that it becomes more difficult to

distinguish people with negative currencies from others. However, this risks generating imprecise matching to needs and, taken to an extreme, negates any criteria, targeting or rationing mechanism.

There may be scope to make the nature of interaction more positive, to provide encouragement to recipients and build confidence. If empowerment and choice are necessary to create a good match between good and need, and the better the match the more effective provision is, this implies better value for money. If the purpose of welfare provision is to build and sustain capacity to facilitate participation in wider distributive processes, and it is effective in achieving this purpose, it implies dependency on welfare provision should diminish, e.g. effective employment services mean that people who were on benefit move more quickly into paid work. If individuals are empowered to manage their own situation, professionals do not have to do it for (or to) them. This is why tax-payers' should support empowerment and choice for recipients.

At root, a more fundamental question arises, consequent on the acknowledgement of diversity, both of prospective recipients and socio-cultural contexts. Whereas arguments can be sustained that certain attributes, skills, etc are different but of equal value, to make any claim to equality, or equitable treatment, must logically imply some form of commonly shared benchmarks. If diversity permeates down to these too, the quest to equalise is doomed to descend into postmodernist chaos. There is no common ground, no dialogue possible in a shared language. Core concepts like distribution, need, merit, criteria, benchmarks, processes, etc, may be entirely alien, without obvious parallels or analogies to be drawn. However, even a cursory glance confirms this does not reflect reality. While they may take very different forms, such concepts are discernible in all societies. This is why a focus on samenesses, as well as differences – at a conceptual as well as practical level - is so important.

Overall, this points to the need for simple processes to deliver complex, personalised goods and services. There may well be models other than one programme for all, or individualised responses. Yet, if assessment is simplified, can goods be precisely matched to recipient needs? To simplify production implies standardisation. How can a standardised good or service meet diverse needs? If neither private nor traditional public sector models are able to empower disadvantaged end users, what is the alternative? This chapter has both posed questions and provided clues about answers. Before proceeding to develop these further,

consideration is required of the third site for adjustment, namely micro-level agents, their identities and the nature of relationships and processes from that perspective.

¹ These concepts primarily concern the notion that particular goods or (dominant) good, act as the means of acquiring a wide variety of others.

² The concept of framing used here refers to the formal structuring of a process and associated relationships. It is less complex and nuanced than Goffman's (1974) exposition of 'frame analysis', which broadly concerns the analysis of 'strips of activity', and how they can be 'keyed', understood and experienced.

³ Exceptions might include developments around direct payments.

Chapter 8: A Micro-level View – the Enactment of Social Relationships and Implications for Engagement

Introduction

This chapter considers the qualities social relationships need to possess if they are to maximise the inclusion of diversity on a basis of empowerment. Theory explored earlier proposed that identity is constructed through socialisation (chapter 4). It is reflected back through "...dialogical relations with others." (Taylor 1992, p34). The nature of interaction should therefore have profound implications for how an individual feels about themselves. Consistent with discussion in chapter 7 on the disincentives provoked by the affirmation of 'negative currencies', it could also affect how s/he is viewed by others in subsequent transactions. Where possible, interactions that affirm incapacity, invade privacy, or compromise autonomy are likely to be avoided. If welfare provision is broadly intended to build capacity, and therefore it is necessary to target incapacity, this poses significant challenges.

This chapter considers how incentives or disincentives to engagement can arise due to the way policy is delivered through the enactment of social relationships. What occurs at micro-level face-to-face interaction is of critical importance to inclusion. Without an appreciation of what transactional needs are, how interaction may be experienced, and the threats it can pose to identity, it is difficult to structure or deliver processes in order to promote engagement. As before, the intention is to provide an 'ideal model' to enable deconstruction and analysis - not a literal, empirical description of all social relationships.

Micro-level agents and interaction

Personal conditions of interaction

The objectives of micro-level agents will obviously be extremely variable, depending on individual history and circumstances, socio-cultural pressures and psychological make up. Nonetheless, it is possible and useful to identify in generic terms what might steer decisions

to engage in, or disengage from, social processes and relationships. The following describes requirements of the process as much as its outcome.

If indeed the case that individual identity is a construct resulting from interaction with the wider environment, it may be speculated that potential for the objectives of each sphere and capacity for associated types of relationship are to be found within the individual. As discussed, there can be direct and indirect social pressures to adhere to the dominant socio-cultural paradigm. The ideal-type objectives theorized in chapter 6, present in differing combinations within meso-level institutions (chapter 7), may be internalized and expressed in the objectives and behaviours of micro-level actors. Individuals may be motivated to acquire goods (economic objectives), and/ or by concern for the well-being of family members or fellow citizens (social objectives). Behaviours may be steered by the desire to exert power over others (political objectives), a commitment to religious beliefs and codes (cultural objectives), and by rights and obligations (civil objectives). The balance between objectives, and the style of relationship engaged in, may vary. It may be contingent on the context in which individuals find themselves, or in which they understand themselves to be. As with macro/ meso level structures, imbalances may become unsustainable, jeopardizing the cohesion – or the integrity in the sense of integration - of the personality. If relationships with others are to be sustained, there needs to be some degree of compatibility between both parties' objectives and understandings of situations. Leeway may be needed for adjustment to synchronise expectations and adopt appropriate styles of interaction.

Building on Lockwood's approach (1992), inclusion may not just be contingent on systems and social integration, but also what could be termed personality integration. There may be other factors that strengthen the integrity of the personality or threaten its disintegration, acting respectively as incentives or disincentives to engagement. According to Turner (2002) all situations will be assessed to gauge the scope for meeting generic transactional needs. These include the positive affirmation of self; profitable exchange pay-offs (experienced as gratification or utility), group inclusion (to feel part of the interpersonal flow); trust (predictability and sincerity), and 'facticity' (that experiences of the world/ situation are commonly held and are as they appear¹). To this could be added that some degree of control or power is required to preserve autonomy. If present, these contribute to the positive strengthening of the integrity of the personality, of the relationship and of confidence in the environment (what Giddens terms 'ontological security'). Conversely, if absent, the threat of personality disintegration and consequently disincentives to engage will be greater.

The imperative to satisfy 'transactional needs' clearly does not just drive prospective recipients' actions but those of all involved in the process. Social relationships seem likely to be weaker where one party meets their transactional needs through depriving the other (e.g. where one party gains 'positive affirmation of self' by demonstrating their superiority over the other, or confirms their utility by confirming the helplessness of the other), or where there is a significant imbalance between the two.

Situations which do not meet transactional needs risk provoking threats to 'face'²: "...an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes..." (Goffman 1967, p3). The preservation of 'face' could be described as another 'transactional need', perhaps going in tandem with 'positive affirmation of self'. It may be an objective in that a person may experience peer-group pressure to do something and would lose face if s/he declined. However, it is likely to be a minimum condition of any interaction, given that:

"During interaction the individual is expected to possess certain attributes, capacities, and information which, taken together, fit together into a self that is at once coherently unified and appropriate for the occasion." (Goffman 1967, p105).

The aim is to avoid becoming embarrassed or flustered: "...to appear flustered, in our society at least, is considered evidence of weakness, inferiority, low status, moral guilt, defeat, and other unenviable attributes." (Goffman 1967, pp101, 102).

It requires that each party express the appropriate deference (appreciation) and demeanour (presentation of qualities or, in our terms, currencies). Rules of demeanour and of deference can be asymmetrical, i.e. there will be different expectations of social unequals. While subordinates would be expected to show greater deference to superordinates rather than the reverse, there is a double-edge to 'deference'. Where it takes the form of 'special treatment' it can single people out in ways which are stigmatising. Where deference is expressed by the anticipation of needs based on untested assumption (men spontaneously opening doors for women is a classic example) it can be experienced as disempowering; as confirmation of the helplessness and inferior status of the recipient. There can be asymmetry too in the extent of familiarity displayed:

"Between status equals we may expect to find interaction guided by symmetrical familiarity. Between superordinate and subordinate we may expect to find asymmetrical relations, the superordinate having the right to exercise certain familiarities which the subordinate is not allowed to reciprocate." (Goffman 1967, p64).

Moreover:

“...many of the forms of behaviour through which we can be offensively treated by one category of others are intimately allied to those through which members of another category can properly display its bondedness to us.” (Goffman 1983, p4).

This begins to explain why informality is not always the way to diffuse tensions but may instead be received as offensive; as familiarity bestowed on a subordinate by a superordinate.

To avoid embarrassment and miscommunication requires not only that the parties concerned understand such expressions of status, what their status is and what consequently is appropriate, they need to adhere to the ‘rituals of interaction’. This entails reading and emitting correct behavioural cues such as facial expressions, eye contact, body language, tones of voice and conversational pauses:

“The ultimate behavioral materials are the glances, gestures, positionings, and verbal statements that people continuously feed into the situation, whether intended or not. These are the external signs of orientation and involvement...” (Goffman 1967, p1).

To get these wrong can be destructive to a relationship, no matter how well formally structured. For example, to use a tone of voice to an adult that might normally be used in conversing with children will be received as infantilisation, irrespective of the content of what is said. To use an abrupt tone may convey disrespect, failure to make eye contact may exclude and/or express disinterest, to interrupt is aggressive, etc: “It is...important to see that the self is in part a ceremonial thing, a sacred object which must be treated with proper ritual care and in turn must be presented in a proper light to others.” (Goffman 1967, p91).

Goffman theorises risks of interaction as ‘personal-territory contingencies’. Risks can take physical forms; vulnerability to “...physical assault, sexual molestation, kidnapping, robbery and obstruction of movement...” (1983, p4). However, in addition “...in the presence of others we become vulnerable through their words and gesticulation to the penetration of our psychic preserves, and to the breaching of the expressive order we expect will be maintained...” (1983, p4). If relationships are to be unthreatening and disincentives to participate avoided, expectations need to be shared about how far into personal territory it is acceptable for another to stray. Understanding of how ‘psychic preserves’ may inadvertently be breached is clearly important. This indicates, perhaps counter-intuitively, that for engagement to occur successfully sometimes the maintenance of distance is required.

As seen in chapter 5, it is not just technically being included that matters, people need to feel 'subjectively included'. Yet, it is far from the case that for inclusion on an appropriate basis, all relationships must have an emotional content. As Turner contends, "Although humans are social...they have never been emotional junkies who seek deep, personal contact with all others in all social relations." (2002, p3). To attempt to forge such connections with everyone would in all likelihood be experienced as profoundly inappropriate and intrusive, constituting a disincentive to engage. To claim, as some have (Turner 2002, discussing Durkheim), that emotions are social glue is to overlook the possibility that they can repel (and expel) as much as to attract.

This poses a challenge to Granovetter's definition of a 'strong tie' (chapter 6): "...the strength of a tie is a (probably linear) combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding), and the reciprocal services which characterize the tie." (1973, p1361). Emotional intensity is not necessarily what is required to maintain a strong tie – in the wrong circumstances it might have the opposite effect. However, the notion of reciprocity (or symmetry), not just regarding 'services' but other factors, does seem likely to be a consistent feature of positive social relationships. Whether symmetry has to imply a mirror image is debatable. It could infer that each party contributes something different but of equal value, that a need/ service on one side is balanced by a different need/ service on the other, that each may be 'tied in' to the relationship by different means but to the same extent; that symmetry is 'complex' but ultimately equivalence prevails.

To establish strong emotional ties with people who are unfamiliar, with different values and expectations might compromise trust and relationship stability. The tie and the 'personal territory' of the parties concerned are more vulnerable to rupture. It ceases to be a strong tie and could become dangerous - a cause of alienation rather than attachment. The likelihood of this may be increased by asymmetry in emotional investment. The lack of repercussions on the party with less removes constraints on transgression. Symmetry is likely to be an important principle, particularly in 'strong' emotion-based relationships where the costs of rupture can be severe.

Characteristics

Salience and levels

In order to meet transactional needs and in view of the potential damage incurred by failure to meet them, it becomes useful to conceptualise what, in generic terms, a 'self' is composed. If, as previously discussed (chapter 4) there are multiple aspects to identity, it is plausible that some will have more salience than others: "When self is conceptualized as having multiple identities, these identities are typically seen as ordered into hierarchies of prominence and salience..." (Turner 2002, p100).

Characteristics assume meaning and significance subject to their context. Some come to the fore, others recede or are actively negated. Some have value in one context, but are irrelevant, even negative, in another. Characteristics can be created by context, as in the social model of disability, or by discourse, as in 'queer theory'. They may be personal, as in the medical model. Notwithstanding the role of context in creating identity, imputing values and significance to characteristics, clearly some aspects of personal identity can be 'adjusted' even if the context is held constant. Certain characteristics are malleable, some removable, others fixed, irrespective of context or capacity-building. If the context is changed, the significance of characteristics may change, even if the characteristic does not. For example, removing barriers in transactional infrastructure (making premises accessible, using large print) means a person with an impairment ceases to be disabled. The impairment remains, but assumes insignificance. However, even if contexts change, it is possible that certain characteristics will consistently dominate and consistently be accorded much the same value and significance, whether by the individual with said characteristics or by others (Turner 2002).

Salience is thus not only contingent on external context or a given transaction. It is also gauged by the individual according to the characteristic's importance for self-image and the integrity of their personality (see Turner 2002). The 'core self' is comprised of 'transsituational cognitions', i.e. feelings about identity which remain consistent in different situations. Here reside the most intense emotions about oneself and how one should be treated. 'Sub-identities' are cognitions or feelings about self in particular situations, such as family, work, etc – the suggestion being that these differ according to the situation. 'Role identities' refer to cognitions or feelings about self in particular roles. Although the levels are roughly consistent with each other "...considerable slippage can occur between core self and role identities." (Turner 2002, p101), for example a person may conceive themselves as highly competent (core self), but accept their incompetence in a particular role. While Turner's principle of slippage holds, it could be argued that sense of self may be firmly

rooted in role, and vulnerabilities of the core self may be perceived as situation or institution-related, e.g. fears about engagement with the medical profession, rather than necessarily residing in 'transsituational cognitions'.

The differing salience of characteristics, whether determined by individuals, by others or by context, is one way in which identity might be conceptualized as having levels. Levels might also be considered in terms of the characteristics discernible at different distances. Broad defining characteristics may be apparent at more distant societal levels, while myriad more become apparent through prolonged personal contact in different settings. Levels might also be conceptualised in terms of the extent of intrusion into privacy. Some characteristics, or combinations thereof, may be understood as particular to the individual while others act as the gateway to membership of collective structures and networks.

Clashes and mismatches

Clashes can occur between expectations associated with different characteristics. Contradictions in cultural expectations about different aspects of identity can result in one aspect effectively negating another. For example, if women are expected to be carers and disabled people cared for, a disabled mother might find that: "...impairment can **negate** another aspect of **identity**, namely gender and motherhood." (Zappone 2003, p135, her emphasis). For a person with supposedly subordinate characteristics (such as being female, disabled, and/ or from a black or minority ethnic background) to occupy a senior role may necessitate that assumptions are challenged in order to rationalise their co-existence: "...as policy analysts and practitioners we need to see the subjects of oppression/ subordination, at least potentially, as also and simultaneously constituted in positions of dominance/ power." (Lewis 2002, p158). Within an organisation:

"...subjects will be positioned within and across multiple axes of differentiation and hierarchy. Moreover, this multiple positioning implies that many subjects will simultaneously inhabit both subordinate and *dominant* locations and identities." (Lewis 2002, p148).

Mixed messages are emitted by unexpected combinations of currencies, meaning that identity, relationships and socio-culturally based assumptions have to be questioned and re/negotiated.

Sometimes failure to recognize the whole person is detrimental as capacities, needs or barriers associated with an unacknowledged characteristic impede participation. Sometimes the scope for slippage "... provides insulation against disconfirmation of core self, while potentially offering cognitive and emotional room for defensive strategies to protect the core." (Turner 2002, p102). To focus narrowly on a particular aspect of identity, creating distance between it and the whole person, might be a positive thing to do in certain situations. If rejection ensues, a transaction based on meeting a criterion relating to just one aspect of identity is unsuccessful, or a transaction reliant on negative currencies is successful, it only provides negative confirmation of that one aspect. Moreover, as discussed, only certain aspects of identity will be relevant (or will inadvertently be accorded relevance) while others remain overlooked:

"In considering the individual's participation in social action, we must understand that in a sense he does not participate as a total person but rather in terms of a special capacity or status; in short, in terms of a special self." (Goffman 1967, p52).

Yet, there may be mismatches between the 'special self' that the individual wishes to present and the self recognised by others. On the basis of one aspect of identity, the whole identity may be inaccurately imputed (chapter 7).

Mismatches between the levels of self each party to an interaction reveals may heighten the risk of harmful encroachment into 'personal territory'. For example, if both are strangers, yet only one is required to reveal private, potentially embarrassing, information about her/himself, a mismatch of levels of identity is occurring, with potential detriment to inclusion. Alternatively, invasion of another's 'core self' can be inadvertent, perhaps because an aspect of core identity is not recognized and respected as such, causing humiliation, disorientation, or oppression and hence disincentive to engage.

Limitations

The above suggests there may be limits to the effectiveness of pre-structuring social relationships. There may be limits to the extent to which intrusion into personal territory can be avoided if needs are personal in nature and there is a concern to match services to needs. There is scope for mismatches between emotional and pragmatic drivers, formality and informality, and 'levels of self' – some more easily remedied than others. Expectations about rituals may differ significantly, leading to miscommunication. Moreover, if there are communication barriers, there will also presumably be limitations to the potential to identify

that this has occurred. Finally, there may be difficulties in enabling a person to promote distance between a 'negative' characteristic or embarrassing need and their core self, while simultaneously taking a holistic approach to service provision.

There are limits to which some characteristics can be 'adjusted' to 'fit' with socio-cultural context. While the impact and significance of characteristics (or currencies) can be determined by whether they further a given objective, cultural norms, the nature of socio-cultural conditions and context, certain personal physical characteristics such as impairment remain. In that instance, medical intervention might be a way to 'adjust' the characteristic of impairment. Capacity-building might give the individual the confidence and the techniques to manage their condition. Other matters connected to personal appearance, such as dress, appear more flexible. However, sometimes wearing a certain type of clothing will be central to the 'core person', perhaps for religious reasons. Behavioural characteristics are generally more malleable, although some likewise will be central to the individual's identity. Capacity-building might take the form of education and training to strengthen 'cultural capital'. To build confidence, the strengthening of peer networks might increase 'social capital'. However, there are likely to be limits to the efficacy of capacity-building, due to factors like past history, intellectual capacity, the extent of capacity-building required and resources available.

Implications for social policy

It seems unavoidable that relationships between providers and receivers of welfare services will be profoundly asymmetrical in terms of decision-making powers, access to information, urgency of needs, and so on. It is possible to assess welfare provision to see how well it meets the transactional needs of both parties. Having considered the generic motivations of each, the probable dynamics of interaction start to be revealed. Disincentives to engagement can be identified along with strategies to tackle them. Comparing the two perspectives may expose asymmetries on a range of fronts. These may, or may not, balance each other out. It is important to note that adjustments for one party can have implications for the other. For example, if providers' 'positive affirmation of self' and 'positive exchange pay-offs' are contingent on the helplessness, incapacity and consequent gratitude of recipients, what incentives do they have to empower recipients? Are there other ways in which those transactional needs can be met?

From the perspective of the service provider, 'positive affirmation of self' and 'positive exchange pay-offs' might have pragmatic and emotionally-based aspects. At a pragmatic level, the receipt of a salary might be the main positive exchange pay-off, although without (emotionally rather than pragmatically-based) job satisfaction that may be insufficient motivation. Exit, in the form of leaving to get another more satisfying and/or better-paid job, may well be an option. Positive affirmation might also arise from doing a job well, perhaps evidenced by meeting targets. The nature of targets set thus becomes important. Job satisfaction might be generated by being instrumental in improving people's lives or, (hopefully, if empowerment of recipients is to be promoted) in facilitating them to do so. However, struggles to meet urgent needs in the context of limited resources, having to deal with recipients' anger, disappointment, desperation, negativity, etc, all present challenges.

The group to which providers belong might be comprised of members of the administering institution, fellow colleagues or professionals doing the same job elsewhere. 'Interpersonal flow' might be attributable to the degree of competence with which the institution or team is managed, or by common operating procedures and professional jargon. It is to them that a welfare provider might look for 'facticity'. A professional would want to feel confident that they were prepared to cope with situations that might arise when delivering services. Some degree of predictability in the needs and behaviours of clients would therefore be important, or professional competence (perhaps part of 'core self') might be challenged. However, too great a confidence in the predictability of clients, based on an inadequate assessment of (possibly inadequate) currencies, leads to damaging stereotyping and risks failure to match goods to needs.

While there is scope for recipients to experience 'positive exchange pay-offs' in the form of the gratification derived from meeting basic needs, this has to be weighed against the disincentives of potential costs. Recipients' transactional needs for 'positive affirmation of self' may be thwarted by the fact that access to many public welfare services (excepting education) is contingent on the demonstration of negative currencies (incapacity, helplessness, etc) providing negative rather than positive affirmation. There is no obvious scope for confirmation of utility, but considerable likelihood of confirmation of uselessness. In this context empowerment becomes a critical counter-weight. As discussed in chapter 7, there are ways in which recipients may be empowered irrespective of their negative currencies, by increasing their input to framing, improving accountability mechanisms, capacity-building and support. It necessitates a shift in ethos, away from doing things for and

to people and towards supporting them to do things for themselves (clearly, if providers' 'core self' is wedded to current assumptions and practices, achieving such change becomes challenging).

Impenetrable bureaucratic procedures, lack of information, use of jargon, and powerlessness in decision-making processes all militate against feeling part of the 'interpersonal flow' of group inclusion. This seems to presuppose that inclusion is contingent on group membership, rather than on positive relations between different 'groups', here the recipients and welfare providers. While peer support can play a valuable role in building confidence, a peer group of recipients is not always evident, even if in theory it might exist in the form of voluntary sector organisations catering for particular groups. The role of such organisations in providing support to recipients has arguably been under-developed. Instead voluntary sector organisations have increasingly been cast as an alternative to public sector providers. If this is what they become, it is unclear who or what would fulfil the critical independent support function (see chapter 7). A further possibility is that recipients are part of a 'culture of dependency' (as per the views of underclass advocates discussed in chapter 5); that in certain areas where benefit receipt is the norm, there will be peer-group pressure to do like-wise.

Whatever Sennett's views (2000) on the importance of time for the development of social bonds, and the role of trust in cementing them (chapter 5) neither may feature in relationships between welfare providers and recipients. Trust may be compromised by unfamiliar environments and procedures, and unpredictable outcomes, and by the conflation of support with policing roles. However, transactional needs for trust and predictability are not only engendered by an emotional basis to a social relationship and long-term familiarity. Trust might also be generated by confidence in a professional's expertise, as may apply in the case of medical diagnosis. Trust may be predicated on objectivity, neutrality and rationality rather than personal familiarity. Predictability is not only an outcome of prolonged contact, but of confidence in what to expect, perhaps engendered through receiving advance information about the process, testimonies from peer group members, or the publication of standards. Critically, though, if such social relationships are to achieve reliability and stability, in the absence of an emotional tie they need to be 'cemented' by something else, such as a legally binding contract.

Affirmation of the urgency, unfairness or intolerableness of the situation (facticity) will not be forthcoming where providers must adhere rigidly to slow, cumbersome procedures and

distance themselves emotionally. In sum, there are many ways in which participation in processes to access welfare goods and services can fail to meet recipients' generic transactional needs. The relationship tie between recipient and provider is asymmetrical in situations where the recipient has urgent needs, and hence a strong emotional investment in having those needs met immediately, while the provider is held into the relationship by a contract of employment from which exit is possible. The latter may certainly have a desire to help people and to do a good job, but there may be various reasons why a pragmatic approach has to be taken – the need to protect their own 'personal territory' in emotionally charged situations, the challenge of juggling the competing needs of different prospective recipients having insufficient resources to meet all, and so on.

If the strength of emotional involvement is proportionate to the degree of access to 'personal territory' comfortably permitted, this poses significant challenges to those charged with delivering welfare services like health or personal care. While the transactional needs of the recipient for trust and predictability might seem more likely to be met by someone familiar to them, such as a partner or family member, this in itself does not necessarily mean that it is empowering. For empowerment it is reasonable to suppose that the tie must be voluntarily chosen and that renegotiation and exit are possible. The difficulties of this are considerably greater where there is a strong emotional investment. Personal care needs, where practical assistance is required with intimate tasks such as getting washed and dressed, provide a fitting example.

Although a person may feel more comfortable receiving such assistance from a partner or close relative, if either become dissatisfied with the arrangement and wish it to cease, there can be wider repercussions for the relationship. If, instead, the assistance is provided by someone employed by the person with care needs, it is simply a matter of employing someone else. An impersonalised, practical approach may sometimes be preferable to a personalised one founded on sentiments of solidarity. It may not be degree of emotional investment that determines how comfortable a person is with access to 'personal territory' but the degree of control over who accesses it. Control may be easier to exercise where there is no emotional investment. Granovetter's definition does not readily accommodate the possibility that a person may have needs that have to be met to ensure their survival, but that these may be of a sheerly practical nature. To separate the meeting of such needs from primary emotionally-based relationships might also help to distance what both parties might consider an aspect of a person's identity which is irrelevant to their relationship.

There is clearly considerable scope for invasion of core self as welfare service deliverers are sometimes obliged to engage with very personal, intimate matters. Health-care providers may have to relate to people in life and death situations or undergoing the potentially extreme trauma of serious illness. Assessment for disability benefits can require highly personal information about incontinence, inability to use toilets unassisted, wash, etc – obliging individuals to confront and demonstrate their incapacity. Child support assessors may need information about sexual partners. Intrusion into private matters may or may not be necessary, i.e. the nature of the assessment and its criteria may or may not reflect the ‘purpose’ of the good in question. If the good is a service to provide assistance with personal care needs, to require information about the nature and extent of those needs seems in keeping with that purpose. However, it remains to be established at what point the assessor can hand over to the recipient responsibility for precise shaping of the service to match needs (having first ensured the recipient has the capacity and/ or support to exercise that responsibility). It may be sufficient for assessors to allocate recipients to broad social categories, in the knowledge that within certain parameters all will have that sort of need. Individuals’ specific requirements may differ, but the resource implications for the provider are much the same and the recipient is better equipped than providers to determine a precise match of service to need.

The complexity of identity and associated sensitivities may be taken to underline the importance of personalisation. To fail to recognise individuality or show interest in it, may be experienced as dehumanising. Yet so too may intrusive and insensitive scrutiny, amounting to the denial of the humanity of the recipient and the treating of her/ him as an object. This suggests that framers and assessors need to be sensitive to achieving the right balance. The degree of scrutiny should reflect only what is required to make an assessment in accordance with the purpose of the good.

Different cultures and sub-cultures (not just based on ethnicity, but perhaps also age, socio-economic class, even specific organisations) have different social rituals, respond differently to, or recognize different, behavioural cues, use different language, require/ expect different levels of deference and express deference and demeanour differently. Even micro-level factors may differ culturally, such as the significance of eye-contact or the lack of it, use of gestures, tone of voice, interruptions, etc. To deliver culturally sensitive (hence inclusive) services is therefore not just a matter of how a process is structured but how face-to-face interaction is conducted. Moreover, to stand up straight, make eye-contact and give a firm

hand-shake may generally be understood as signals of confidence, but may be impossibilities for people with certain forms of impairment no matter how confident they are. It may be that social barriers are addressed by the way processes are structured (e.g. flexible appointment times and places) yet nonetheless discrimination or misrecognition occurs at the point of enactment.

To promote participation there are a number of routes open to social policy. The focus can be on 'adjusting' the individual so that s/he 'fits' the socio-cultural context. Alternatively, it is possible to adjust the socio-cultural context to accommodate diversity. On grounds of reducing stigma by minimising negatively perceived difference rather than underlining it, the latter is generally to be preferred. Nonetheless, as has been acknowledged, there are limits constraining or preventing adjustment of either beyond a certain point. In whatever socio-cultural context, adjusted or otherwise, capacity-building individuals should add to an individual's empowerment. However, once limits to adjustments to both have been reached, additional 'special' measures will be critical to the inclusion of those who still remain beyond the mainstream's perimeters.

A framework of relationship properties

Identifying properties

Discussion of transactional needs, dangers to identity and consequent disincentives to engage has suggested a number of qualities that a social relationship should have (and pitfalls to avoid) if they are to promote inclusion. To add to this, as discussed in chapter 6, it is possible to classify distinct 'ideal-type' relationships by sphere/ macro-level objectives, each with distinguishing combinations of properties. An emotional basis to a social relationship is appropriate in some circumstances, a more pragmatic basis in others, particularly where engagement with an unfamiliar peer group, process or network is indicated. The possibility that 'strong' ties held together by emotional intensity might on occasion provide disincentives to engagement, while 'weak' ties in which an emotional content is absent may be more successful suggests that these somewhat judgmental tags are misleading.

As suggested, ideal-type relationships logically intermesh (chapter 6). Different objectives and associated types of relationship can apply at different stages of a process, whatever its

overarching objective (chapter 7). More importantly for the purpose at hand, to isolate component properties might provide a basis for in-depth and neutral theorising of the relationships between individuals and welfare institutions, casting aside the loaded question of whether they should be delivered by the market, the public sector, or forms of hybrid. From the discussion above it would appear that economic and social ideal-type relationships may each have positive and negative properties and that neither adequately captures all that need to be considered when designing and enacting processes linking prospective recipients to welfare institutions, or thence onwards to engagement with new processes and networks. It is also clear that relationships with public sector welfare providers cannot be assumed to be ‘social’ (see chapter 6) and it may be that those with private sector providers will not always be ‘economic’. This begs the question of what types of relationship typically arise between private and public sector institutions and their customers or clients.

For all these reasons, it should simplify matters to abstract back to identify the possible component properties of relationships. A range of properties can be extracted from preceding discussions which, in theory, could cluster together in different ways. For the sake of convenience and clarity, they are summarized below in tabular form and grouped under loose headings:

Table 4: Component properties of relationships

Property:	Explanation:
<i>Motivation/ Driver</i>	
Personal/ Collective/ Other individual gain	The motivation may be for personal gain, for the good of ‘society’ in broad somewhat hazy terms, or for the benefit of a designated individual or individuals, perhaps family members. A combination may also be possible – to suggest that an action would benefit all the above may prove particularly motivating.
<i>Power</i>	
Symmetrical or asymmetrical	A relationship may be a/symmetrical with regard to any property, but this is likely to be particularly significant with regard to power. The power balance within a relationship may or may not be equal – but ‘complex equality’ may be possible, i.e. one party may have the upper-hand in one way and the other in another, leading to equivalence overall.
Empowering or disempowering	The way in which a relationship is structured, enacted or experienced might exacerbate power differentials, confirm them or redress them.

Directly/ Indirectly coercive or chosen	Where power is asymmetrical it may be expressed overtly through direct, explicit coercion. However, coercion might also be achieved through more subtle, indirect means, such as social pressure. Alternatively, a course of action may be chosen – although whether choice is an outcome of indirect coercion may be hard to ascertain.
<i>Security</i>	
Degree of trust, predictability	Trust is contingent on predictability – even unpredictability may be predictable. The degree of trust is likely to be a particular important property.
Overt or covert objectives	Overt objectives increase predictability and hence trust. Covert, or at least fudged, objectives can be necessary to avoid conflict/ preserve agreements
Stable or unstable	Both stability and instability can be predictable, but stability increases security.
<i>Judgment</i>	
Rational/ pragmatic or emotional/ faith-based	Participation/ Behaviour hinges on objective assessment of criteria, rationally chosen to meet an objective, or on what is felt or believed, whether or not irrational and irrespective of pragmatic implications.
Personalised or impersonal	Action is steered by close scrutiny of the individual e.g. to tailor provision, or all are treated the same (targeted versus universal)
<i>Style</i>	
Formal or informal	Action to be taken is pre-structured with designated roles and occurs as part of an explicit, institutionally or culturally defined process, or it is unstructured, fluid, etc
<i>Dynamics</i>	
Competitive or collaborative	The aim may be to acquire status, profit, goods, by demonstrating superiority over others, or to pool resources into collective endeavour.
Affirming sameness and distancing difference, or opening up/ engaging with difference	Dynamics may be inward-looking, towards strengthening and delimiting peer groups while emphasizing the difference of others, or they may be outward looking, towards building relationships with non-peer-group members, finding commonalities and/ or welcoming new resources, information and perspectives

The properties cited constitute a means of analyzing relationships of all sorts, between individuals, between institutions, or between individuals and institutions. Although in a given socio-cultural context, certain combinations of properties will be typical of certain types of relationships (economic, social, political, etc), there is scope for variation. It seems likely, perhaps logical, that some properties will go together, and some will be improbable companions or even mutually exclusive. It may be that, within a certain combination of

properties or context, a particular property has a negative effect whereas in another its effect is positive.

Some properties are likely to be almost always desirable if the objective is inclusion, namely symmetry, empowerment, trust and predictability, overt objectives and motivations (these being necessary to further the others) and the absence of coercion. Conversely, asymmetry, disempowerment, lack of predictability, covert objectives and motivations, and indirect or direct coercion will generally be undesirable. There are exceptions to the rule: asymmetry and disempowerment might be appropriate in situations where a person needs protection; complete predictability might lead to 'anomie'; overt objectives mean clashes have to be addressed, potentially endangering fragile relationships which could survive if objectives were left unspoken and 'fudged'; indirect and direct coercion might be appropriate to prevent destructive behaviours and to the extent that anarchy is the alternative.

Whether other properties are positive or negative is more debatable. Personal gain may mean ruthlessly discounting the needs and desires of others, or take the more positive form of 'self-help'. Collective gain, or the gain of others, may spell the altruistic empowerment of others, or paternalism. For both parties to gain equally (if differently) implies symmetry to the relationship. Alternatively, through voluntarily 'helping' others, the 'helper' may gain self-esteem and a sense of usefulness. Such positive affirmation of their identity becomes contingent upon, and increases proportionately to, the neediness of others; exacerbating power asymmetry in the relationship. Stability may be necessary to build confidence and security to respond positively to new experiences or people. However, if over-played, it may be the route to stagnation, entrapment and 'anomie' (as expressed in what some term 'welfare dependency'). Formality might be appropriate in an institutional setting, perhaps because it is expected or because ties are contractual rather than emotionally-based. It may be alienating in a social setting - although here too there can be rigid adherence to certain possibly unspoken rules and rituals.

This begins to signal how inclusive and empowering ideal-type relationships might be constructed. However, it also becomes clear that to make judgments about whether a property is negative or positive depends on the objective or purpose of the process and associated relationships, the social meaning of goods for distribution and other contextual factors. While it seems likely that the properties of symmetry, empowerment, trust and predictability, and lack of coercion will generally feature in inclusive empowering

relationships, it is debatable whether any property can be taken as normatively negative or normatively positive, irrespective of context.

Implications for social policy

Taking the overarching objective to be the maximization of the inclusion of diversity on a basis of empowerment, and the purpose of welfare goods and services to be to facilitate and support this, using the above schema it becomes possible to identify the properties that relationships between individuals and welfare providers should have. It is also important to acknowledge that limitations identified in this and previous chapters circumscribe what is possible.

Motivation

As discussed above, it is not just the motivation of prospective welfare users that requires consideration, but of all players - extending beyond providers and recipients. Of particular importance if welfare goods and services are to be provided on a collective basis and funded by taxation rather than privately funded and acquired by individuals (clearly impossible for those whose starting point is that they have no money, and difficult for those more obviously at risk), is the motivation of the public. For welfare provision to meet its objectives in this context requires that the public is motivated to support it, providers are motivated to deliver it and prospective recipients are motivated to take it up. It is therefore necessary to demonstrate that all gain collectively, that greater inclusion benefits all, and that all could gain personally, whether now or in response to possible or probable future needs.

As flagged in chapter 7, if there is moral justice in those who produce also controlling the distribution of the product of their labours, and if that connection is broken – as is the case with publicly funded services, questions of morality tend to shift to establishing the legitimacy of the power of the (intervening) distributors and the ‘deservingness’ of the recipients. The former is likely to reside in the democratic process, notwithstanding that to vote once every four or five years on the basis of wide- ranging manifestos constitutes a somewhat blunt instrument. The latter may entail prospective recipients demonstrating, for example, that needs are serious and unavoidable, that the individual is making every effort to address them and to take up opportunities, that they nonetheless require support and that the support received will make a significant, positive difference. This implies formalised

scrutiny of recipients, the extent of their needs and efforts, and verification of incapacity. Yet, to undergo such a process also implies considerable personal cost to recipients, in terms of affirming their incapacity, disempowerment and low status, and intruding into personal territory.

The challenge for public policy is therefore to find ways of achieving an appropriate balance between ensuring the accountability needed to sustain public support and minimising the personal cost to recipients. There may be ways in which services can be framed and delivered, criteria can be formulated and relationships can be enacted which both remove or reduce personal costs, and ensure – maybe even increase - accountability. Alternatively, it may be a matter of individuals providing for themselves, e.g. through insurance policies, with all the limitations previously covered.

Power

It seems likely that the relationship between welfare provider and recipient will be inherently asymmetrical where the individual's motivation for engagement is the imperative of meeting urgent or basic needs, while the provider's motivations have less emotional content - to fulfil a contract, earn a living, and/ or make a profit, notwithstanding that a 'public service ethos' and sense of vocation may also apply (but see earlier comment on how 'givers' can receive positive affirmation of self). Asymmetries are likely to be present in terms of decision-making power, knowledge/ access to information, and intrusion into personal territory. Such an imbalance may be inevitable and appropriate in view of the context, i.e. the need to safeguard, and be seen to safeguard, public funds. Yet, such asymmetry runs counter to aims of capacity-building and empowering recipients. Here the challenge is to find ways of achieving 'complex symmetry', that is, of finding ways in which to promote greater 'parity of participation' (Fraser 2003), where each can exercise appropriate powers and what might appear conflicting objectives can be rendered compatible.

In situations where accurate assessment requires specialist expertise, such as in the case of medical diagnosis, it is obvious that expert assessors must take prime responsibility for assessment and the identification of an appropriate course of action. However, there is still an active role for the recipient in terms of presenting their needs and, perhaps having been presented with options, in decision-making about what action is to be taken. In other situations such as community care provision, for assessors to take sole responsibility for

defining needs and how they should be met is potentially oppressive and risks stereotyping, because they will inevitably be obliged to rely on indicators or currencies. Although it may be possible to refine these, and some will be better than others, as discussed, some qualities are intrinsically difficult to gauge. Moreover, time constraints may understandably create pressures towards rudimentary assessment into client-groups and broad assumptions about associated needs. Conversely, if recipients are enabled to define their own needs and aspirations (e.g. in using employment services, community care, education), the chances may increase of services being well targeted, and hence more effective, thereby making better use of public funds. There may also be occasions where it is possible and appropriate for recipients to take over the finer tuning of services, such as personal care requirements, so that assessors do not have to wade into personal territory to do the precise matching. Instead their role becomes to assess the extent of needs (not their precise nature), present options and information, and monitor expenditure.

For recipients to be in a position to exercise power effectively may necessitate capacity-building. This might entail training of various sorts, mentoring and peer support mechanisms. Independent advocacy should help ensure less confident or articulate recipients' views are heard in decision-making. Access to advice services should help to redress imbalances in information. There are also policy strategies which, through tackling broader inequalities, should have knock-on effects of redressing asymmetries in micro-level interaction. Rights to social goods (benefits, health-care, etc) are important mechanisms for enforcing access to assessments for goods and services and, in the case of social security benefits, to distribution. They provide benchmarks against which to judge and challenge outcomes, clarity about what to expect and confirmation of entitlement, subject to defined characteristics and circumstances. Alongside social rights, anti-discrimination rights play a key role in empowering individuals to enforce changes to open up access and delivery. The Public Sector Equality Duties represent a further shift, away from an onus on individuals to take action after a discriminatory occurrence towards obliging public sector providers to prevent discrimination occurring³. The Duties have largely been interpreted as necessitating the mainstreaming of equality into organisations' processes (including policy-making processes), services, products and, ultimately, their culture. Positive action targeted on specific groups may remain necessary to redress historical disadvantage.

As with rights, transparent national standards and targets setting out how a service should be delivered could operate as benchmarks for expectations and redress, if practical mechanisms

and the necessary information are in place to enable individuals to challenge and receive compensation for treatment falling below the mark. Often, though, they are used as a basis for motivating and directing the priorities of providers and for compiling somewhat crude information on which prospective recipients can (supposedly) be empowered to exercise choice. As previously discussed, indicators will often be broad-brush and approximate, whether it is the provider assessing the recipient or vice versa. There will always be limits to the extent that prior information can accurately portray what will follow, particularly regarding services where quality is significantly determined by how face-to-face interaction is conducted (underlining the weakness of behavioural indicators). Clearly, no one would knowingly opt for an inferior, poor quality good or service, yet that may be all that is available locally. There may be insufficient time, money or transport to make alternatives practical.

Whether relationships are positive or negative may be at least partially determined by whether that relationship is voluntarily entered into, and can be voluntarily exited from. For choices to be worthy of the name, they have to be taken on a basis of information about alternatives, and genuine (relevant) alternatives have to exist. The individual making the choice needs to have confidence in the information presented, and in their capacity to take responsibility for decisions, signalling the importance of capacity and confidence building. It may be the case, as Sen contends (2000), that people have freedom to enter into contracts of employment and that this contrasts with slavery. It may also be true that democratic Governments are freely chosen by their electorates, that unemployed people choose to remain on welfare and patients choose to surrender their autonomy to the medical profession. However, apparent choices may also be symptomatic of a lack of meaningful/ practical alternatives, or lack of awareness of them.

How meaningful and useful choice is, and whether it really continues to mean providers choose recipients (see below on dynamics), remains uncertain. Particularly when exercising choice over specialist services, like health, education, legal or financial advice, the primary consideration may be confidence in the quality of local providers, rather than a choice of providers. Moreover, choices may notionally exist, but fail to reflect needs. Again, this signals the importance of involving recipients in framing goods and services, and providing feedback mechanisms. In some instances, like the provision of personal care, it may be entirely reasonable and feasible for the individual recipient to have a great deal of choice over who provides what care and when they provide it, thereby framing the service they

receive. Indeed, it could be argued that choice is particularly important in situations where 'personal territory' has to be encroached upon. Empowerment through increasing choice is therefore not a straightforward matter. It may be important in some situations, less so or near-meaningless in others.

It is noticeable that, although there are currently declared intentions to extend and promote choice, in other contexts it has been explicitly removed and autonomy curtailed. For example, benefit claimants of working age increasingly face compulsion, to attend Work-Focused Interviews, participate in programmes to increase employability and/ or seek work. There are, of course, obvious instances where imposition is justified, such as where it involves the enforced detention of criminals who pose a danger to the wider public. More debatable are situations where people may choose not to take up an opportunity because they lack confidence in their capacity to succeed, maybe having absorbed socio-cultural expectations about their lack of capacity or due to evidence of past failure. Here enforced intervention to build confidence and capacity may well be justified – although tackling social barriers to prevent reinforcement of negative experience is equally necessary.

When it comes to supporting unemployed or economically inactive people of working age through the benefit system, to increase the power and choice of recipients may be thought to risk incurring moral hazard (i.e. promoting 'welfare dependency' by removing incentives to work) and losing public support for redistribution. Yet, if increasing power and choice means better matching employment services to meet needs, build capacity and remove barriers, this should provide a faster route away from benefits, not an extension of an (alleged) comfort-zone.

Security

In various ways, commentators have drawn attention to the need for stability in, or durability of, social relationships. However, it appears not all forms of relationship are deemed to require long-term stability to promote inclusion. Indeed, as discussed, long-term, stable relationships with the welfare state have been branded as 'welfare dependency' and evidence of 'parasitic neediness' (Sennett 2000, though not a view he endorses). Instead, options for inclusion may be increased by the flexibility of short-term relationships, while certain long-term relationships can signal, or reinforce exclusion. This is consistent with Granovetter's description of the importance of weak-tie bridges for social mobility. It underlines the

potential role for welfare provision of exposing recipients to new networks, and of a focus on exit strategy. Yet, as previously flagged, to forge links with different groups, to move into new and unfamiliar environments, requires a basis of security – through peer support, mentoring, trial runs - if there is to be sufficient confidence to take risks. Given the ‘precarization’ of labour market relationships (chapter 5), and the limited room for manoeuvre available to under-resourced people, it would be unsurprising if the risks incurred by moving from benefit into work prove too great.

Similar considerations apply when it comes to entrance strategy – what encourages or deters people from engaging with the welfare services that should promote their wider inclusion. Maybe more can be done to increase predictability, to clarify what can be expected, hence avoiding experiences of ‘flustering’ or ‘wrong face’. Opening up the workings of welfare institutions to external stakeholders, building links with local organisations and communities, involving them in consultations and decision-making, may help to promote inclusion by making institutions more familiar and more responsive.

Security is also promoted through building trust in the individual assessors and/ or deliverers of welfare services. It is of particular importance when it comes to encroachment into personal territory. Trust might be generated by getting to know an individual assessor/ deliverer, so that the same GP, care provider, teacher, etc is seen each time. Yet, bearing in mind that trust may be required as a prerequisite, i.e. in order to embark on engagement with services, and that relationships will be between potentially very different strangers, other mechanisms need to be found. The recommendation of peers may be influential in building trust, as may evidence of qualifications, standards, etc. Trust may be undermined in situations where the motivations of assessors/ deliverers are unclear. Are decisions made according to professional judgments concerning the recipient’s best interest, or over-ridden by other objectives to cut costs, meet targets, or save time? Could trusting the assessor/ deliverer lead to recipients disclosing areas of core self which will then be used in evidence against them? The importance of clarity about role and objectives is indicated. As was highlighted in chapter 7, benefit assessors can play dual roles of policing and supporting claimants, potentially provoking distrust and circumspection, meaning that neither role is likely to be fulfilled effectively.

In general, distribution of welfare goods and services is based on objective, rational pragmatic judgments, rather than emotional or faith-based responses, these instead falling into the province of charitable giving. Yet negative reactions to difference, such as racism, homophobia, disabilism, etc, are emotionally rather than rationally-driven, whatever the spurious attempts at intellectual justification. The aim is to ensure that the responses to diversity of those involved in framing and delivering welfare provision are consciously considered and rational, and that sub-conscious, emotive responses are exposed, challenged and dispensed with.

There are distinctions to be drawn between personalised (tailored to an individual's needs) goods and services, and personal (normatively private) assessment procedures. When it comes to personal (normatively private) matters, the challenge is how to achieve tailored personalisation while minimising intrusion. As discussed, markets are generally viewed as more likely to provide personalised goods and services, and offer wider choice than the traditionally standardised 'one-size fits all' approach of the public sector. Where social goods are accessed through purchase in the market, whether or not money can be regarded as an "...emotionally neutral medium..." (Turner 2002, p2), it is certainly the case that it is easier to assess accurately and unobtrusively than behavioural or physical characteristic currencies. In contrast, assessments for social rights-based provision are often concerned with more personal matters - typically deservingness, need and possibly threat - relying on imprecise proxy indicators and/ or invasive questioning. The potentially controversial conclusion is that discrimination, as misrecognition, is more likely to occur when it comes to provision via social rights than via the market, and disincentives to engagement are likely to be greater. The acquisition of social goods via the market can mean an impersonal form of assessment to receive personalised goods, state provision has often requires personal assessment for standardised goods. The challenge for welfare provision is to find ways of enabling goods to be personalised without this being contingent on having money, or necessitating intrusion.

The degree of state scrutiny, of behaviours, morals, resources, experienced by benefit claimants, ex-offenders, refugees, drug addicts, mental health service users, to name just some possible groups, is likely to be particularly high in situations where they are seeking to access public resources or are deemed a potential threat, to themselves or to others. This underlines that some relationships can be indicative of exclusion, or risk of exclusion, rather

than the reverse. It could persuasively be argued that relationships with the state are if anything intensified when the risk of exclusion is greatest. Thus, intensive and restrictive relationships with the state, and no relationship with the state, can both be indicative of exclusion. Regarding the former, intensive scrutiny may be experienced as dehumanising, whereas the latter dehumanises by non-recognition.

If the approach has a collective/ broad group or universal basis, despite being impersonal, provision may well be experienced as less stigmatising. The risk is that by assessing with a broad-brush the good/ service itself is an imprecise match to individual needs. If universality takes the form of dividing people into one-dimensional categories founded on one characteristic, barriers associated with other characteristics will be missed. This suggests a holistic approach is required, reflecting and tapping into different aspects of identity and making connections with associated peer group networks. However, it may also be a matter of facilitating the individual to distance her/himself from troublesome or negative aspects of her/ his identity where it will strengthen the integrity of the personality or self-esteem.

Although a more personalised matching may be desirable, there are dangers in charging headlong down the road of personalization, discarding benchmarks, evidence of equitable treatment and scope for redress along the way. Action to increase the power of recipients could backfire, instead shifting power to assessors - particularly given pre-existing imbalances. However, it does not have to be a choice between universal provision to reduce stigma or a personalized approach to match provision to individuals. As will be explored in chapter 9, it may be possible to combine the two.

Style

Relationships can be formalized with roles clearly delineated, criteria specified and so on. Alternatively they can be informal and fluid. If there are criteria, they may be located in the assessor's subconscious, as may be the indicators of whether criteria are met. It does not follow that because a process is formalized subconscious factors do not intervene. The obvious implication is that the framers, and particularly the assessors, of welfare provision need to have appropriate training to raise awareness of misplaced assumptions. This also points to the importance of mechanisms for redress.

The formality and objectivity of rights have long been acclaimed by the disability movement as preferable to charity, where awards hinge on subjective, often emotionally-based, responses of pity. The former bestows dignity, whereas the latter is experienced as demeaning. Yet some might see compassion for those less fortunate as a positive indicator of solidarity. Another interpretation, though, is that this is the antithesis of 'collective empowerment', underlining the power of the benefactor over the individual recipient.

Relationships with and between institutions need to be formalised, if they are to promote the coherency, clarity and transparency of potentially complex processes, and accountability to recipients and the wider public. Those occurring between micro-level actors will more often be informal. However, in as much as all relationships ultimately require micro-level face-to-face interaction, it may be that informal, uncontrolled or unexpected elements occur at that point, undermining formalised objectives and strategy. Again, appropriate training for assessors and those delivering services is indicated.

Dynamics

Competition can be a means of generating incentives to make an effort and to innovate, to enable choice, and (arguably) to maximize efficiency and demonstrate it to tax-payers. Engagement with distributive processes as a prospective recipient is likely to be fuelled by dynamics arising from need, desire, scarcity, and/or competition. The introduction of rationing criteria, or more stringent currency requirements, is how competition is usually managed where limitations to increasing supply apply. Such processes are discernible both in free market transactions and those occurring in the public sector, although motivations, rationing mechanisms and ultimate objectives take different forms.

Scarcity can apply at any stage of the distributive process. The location of rationing criteria and competition depends on where it occurs. A shortage of recipients in relation to administrative capacity and/or available goods means competition among providers to attract recipients. In effect, roles and powers are reversed. Recipients assess which providers best meet their criteria, rather than vice versa. Alternatively, a surfeit of recipients means competition between them for selection by providers.

Although an increase in production might be possible, scarcity may be constructed in order to meet the objectives of macro-level framers, whether to generate profit, or exert control

over the behaviour of individuals, rewarding adherence to the objectives and norms of the dominant socio-cultural configuration. The objectives for distributive processes are not necessarily just to serve as mechanisms through which to distribute resources. Primarily they can be for managing behaviour in order to achieve a range of possible socio-cultural objectives.

Competition between providers may have the desired effects of motivating, generating efficiency, etc, but, by the same token, militate against joined-up inter-agency working, the sharing of good practice and information, and peer support between providers. Where different providers have responsibility for different but interconnected services, this undermines a holistic approach to clients,. Battles for resources between organizations or departments create territorialism and silo-working. While competition between individual prospective recipients of welfare is unlikely to have much impact if they are unaware of each other's existence, where it occurs between categories it can be socially divisive, setting one against another. It can lead to attempts to discredit the deservingness of people with certain characteristics, as occurred to lone parents in the mid-1990's who were repeatedly branded by politicians and right-wing media as 'feckless'. In such cases, though, the competition engineered is not about the degrees of deservingness of different groups of claimants, but between that of the discredited group and tax-payers, as a precursor to cutting the former's benefit and the latter's taxes.

If competition promotes separatism and exclusion, and collaboration the opposite, it follows that the preferred dynamics associated with welfare provision are the latter. Notwithstanding the realities of budgetary and other constraints that will always apply, it has been indicated that much can be done to promote the inclusion and empowerment of recipients. While certain properties typically associated with economic 'ideal-type' relationships can be helpful, and competition has its place, to transport the values and dynamics of the market into welfare provision is counter-productive to empowerment, inclusion and integration.

The theoretical framework

Over the course of chapters 6, 7 and 8 a three-level theoretical framework has taken shape. To summarise, at macro-level it is comprised of spheres (macro-level objectives and all that ensues from them), which can dominate or subsume others, forming socio-cultural

configurations. All must be present to some degree whether as means or ends. Spheres can span societal levels, or be located at a specific level or institution. Processes too can span spheres and levels. The importance was noted of coherence between processes as well as within each. Processes are enacted through relationship networks of peer groups and connections between peer groups. The latter is particularly important for social cohesion and inclusion. 'Ideal-type' relationships were developed in accordance with each sphere and its macro-level objectives. It was shown how even at a theoretical level each must contain elements of the others to achieve its goal. Consistent with the notion of the interdependence of spheres, this indicates that while one can dominate others, beyond a certain point the imbalance becomes too great and the entire edifice collapses. For individuals to participate in relationship networks and associated processes, hospitable socio-cultural conditions must pertain. Barriers in transactional infrastructure can prevent participation irrespective of other factors, including income and skills. Finally, it was shown how expansion of the mainstream does not have to be 'zero-sum', but that where incompatible differences co-exist, 'special' treatment becomes justifiable. Devolution within an over-arching framework to a lower societal level can accommodate area-based diversity. A focus on commonalities shared by diverse people and the usefulness of difference is another approach.

An 'ideal model' of a meso-level distributive process was developed in chapter 7, comprised of stages, functions and roles. The way in which identity is conveyed, recognised or assessed was theorised in terms of 'currencies' of being, doing and having, and the impact of context was highlighted. The significance of the symbolic content (as opposed to the practical use) of goods and currencies was stressed. This was pursued in discussion of different types of capital (social, cultural and economic), its translation into currencies and its role in processes affirming recognition. Consistent with the proposition in chapter 6 that all spheres need to be present, the process was shown to incorporate and express economic, social, political, cultural, and civil features.

For this 'ideal model' to maximise inclusion and promote empowerment a precise match is required between the good and the recipient's needs. It necessitates the devolution to recipients of power to 'frame' and to hold assessors to account. This in turn may necessitate capacity-building. The nature of distributions via market, traditional public sector, and hybrids of the two, were compared in the light of discussion. Each presents challenges to communications between recipients and framers, and hence recognition of the former by the latter, so as to match goods to needs. Perhaps controversially, the scope for misrecognition

appears greater for rights-based transactions, as these rely on more types of currency, including unreliable behavioural currency.

Discussion threw up a number of limitations and constraints: how to balance equitable, consistent treatment with recognition of diversity; how to deliver complex goods via simple processes or ensure standardised goods can be diversely used; how to maximise the choice and empowerment of recipients while preventing ‘moral hazard’ and retaining the support of tax-payers; how to target incapacity without affirming negative currencies.

This chapter began to develop a micro-level framework by discussing the ‘personal conditions’ or transactional needs that should be met if there are to be incentives to participation, levels of identity, and types and salience of characteristics. Given that individuals absorb wider socio-cultural objectives, values and drivers, it seems likely that each has potential to express these, perhaps subject to context. This culminated in a framework of relationship properties (incorporating themes from earlier chapters). Neither ‘ideal-type’ economic nor social relationships are necessarily conducive to empowerment and inclusion. However, it was possible to isolate particular components that are likely to be so. Ultimately, though, what is appropriate will be determined by context and objectives.

Once again, a series of limitations and challenges arose – tensions between recognising the whole person and allowing for ‘slippage’ between the core person and a ‘difficult’ characteristic; how to prevent misrecognition by failure to appreciate different rituals or behavioural cues; how to assess or provide for personal needs without encroaching on personal territory; when is a more distant, objective relationship preferable to a close relationship founded on solidarity, and how to prevent dehumanisation by over-scrutiny or its opposite.

This sets the scene for the final stage: the transformation of the theoretical framework into a new ‘inclusive’ model for social policy, distinct from market or traditional public sector models. While acknowledging limitations, this new model needs to show how dilemmas and challenges can best be resolved in practice and how the mainstream can be widened to include, respect and value diversity.

¹ Presumably this applies irrespective of whether what is occurring is 'real' or fantasy (e.g. film, play, etc) – the confirmation required is of the appropriate frame, to use Goffman's term (1986).

² This includes, in Goffman's terms, to be in 'wrong face' (when a person is unable to integrate information about her/ his social worth) or 'out of face' (when unexpectedly unprepared for/ caught out by a situation)

³ The 'Public Sector Duties' require public bodies or those delivering a 'public function' to promote equality. There is a Race Equality Duty, a Disability Equality Duty and a Gender Equality Duty. They entail carrying out 'impact assessments' to identify and remove barriers to equality before policy is made.

Chapter 9: An ‘inclusive’ model for social policy

Reframing the debate

This chapter takes the theoretical framework developed in preceding chapters as a basis for an ‘inclusive’ model for social policy. The model is described and its implications illustrated. It is not intended to undertake in-depth policy analysis but to demonstrate the model’s potential for this purpose, and as a tool to steer the development and evaluation of policy strategy and initiatives.

The ‘inclusive’ model necessitates a reframing of various aspects of usual debate and a new focus on previously neglected issues. It reframes the terms of the private versus public sector debate. Instead of deriving from existing liberal market and bureaucratic public sector models and weighing up their respective merits and demerits, the ‘inclusive’ model originates from defining objectives and theorising their implications. It does not automatically equate user choice, control and empowerment with the market, or non-discriminatory processes with public sector rights-based provision. Instead, it identifies what is required to maximise the inclusion of diversity into mainstream welfare programmes and thence into mainstream society. Neither market nor traditional public sector models (nor hybrids) seem to fit the bill, although it is conceivable that either or both might be reformed to deliver something closer to the ‘inclusive’ model.

This model is not concerned with ‘adjusting’ either the individual, or transforming the environment, but with the potential to make adjustments to three sites – the socio-cultural context, individuals, and the processes linking the two. To maximise the ways in which individuals with diverse characteristics can successfully interface with wider society necessitates identifying room for manoeuvre and, hence, the limitations and constraints to expansion of ‘the mainstream’. It also necessitates a focus on process and associated relationships, as the means of interaction and in view of their role in constituting both social structures and identities.

It signals a departure from the confines of customary debate concerning equality of opportunity or equality of outcome. In effect, it encompasses the former if premised on the realisation that people with different characteristics or circumstances experience diverse

barriers to participation and these need to be addressed for opportunity to be equal. However, the approach described here also acknowledges that outcomes may be equal in terms of enhancing capabilities, yet very different in terms of how individuals choose to realise them. Furthermore, it highlights the importance of what occurs between access and outcome – and that the outcome of one process may be the starting point for another.

It refines the concept of distributive justice, showing that its achievement is contingent on recognition, so that access is ‘just’ and goods distributed are matched to recipients’ needs. To that end, wherever possible, end-users are empowered to define what is required to meet living standards and to attain them. Distributive justice is also contingent on moving away from an understanding of equality as meaning sameness towards complex equality recognising the equivalence of difference.

It reframes identity – it is not just a matter of an approach based on social categories versus one targeted on individuals. People are members of many social categories *and* unique individuals. Whereas the interests of groups can conflict, particularly when the battle-lines for scarce resources divide social categories and set them against each other, there are generic interests in common and occasions when one social adjustment can bring benefits to people with a wide variety of characteristics. Moreover, there can be occasions where the policy goal covers everyone, but very different action is required to achieve it for people with different characteristics (the implementation of Human Rights is one example). By the same token, a particular action can have very different ramifications for different groups, e.g. relying on continuity of employment as a criterion for promotion might not be expected to disadvantage people from black and minority ethnic communities disproportionately, but could disadvantage women (Mason 2002). This underlines the importance for policy of recognition; of accurate analyses of sameness and difference. These may well reveal unexpected commonality, leading to a reframing of the boundaries between sameness and difference and thence to the reshaping of ‘the mainstream’.

In the course of developing the theoretical framework, a number of limitations and constraints were identified. These now find expression as a set of challenges for social policy, notably, how to:

- identify and provide for commonalities and differences across social categories

- facilitate social mobility, chronologically through life-course transition points (e.g. leaving school, entering and changing work, parenthood, retirement) and contemporaneously between settings (e.g. education, employment, health-care, home-life)
- empower recipients other than through the market, while continuing to demonstrate their desert and retaining the support of tax-payers
- marry a concern for equality and equitable treatment with recognition of diversity
- find ways of simplifying assessment and delivery without standardising the good to be delivered - or standardising it in such a way that it allows for multiple applications by diverse recipient while ensuring that the social meaning and purpose of the good is respected.
- respond to diverse needs arising from incapacity of different sorts without stigmatising recipients
- avoid where possible encroachment into 'personal territory' or instances of 'loss of face'

An inclusive model

Discussion in the preceding three chapters has provided many insights into the nature of barriers that arise in each 'site', how they can be tackled, the challenges for social policy and limitations and constraints on room for manoeuvre. Some can be resolved in the way policy is designed (framed) – the criteria and indicators selected, and devolution to lower societal levels. Some have implications for the delivery of policy (access and assessment) – where, how and by whom. Others, such as resource limitations, are unavoidable and will always be factors to take into account, whatever the policy model or thrust of policy direction.

Socio-cultural context

Various objectives, and combinations thereof, exist at a macro-level and will steer the actions of micro-level actors, operating within different cultural environments. Myriad policies, emanating from different societal levels and government departments, will be developed to support the fulfilment of those objectives. The development of a new policy needs to be located within the wider policy context and the different aspects of people's lives and needs. The interface between policies needs to be dovetailed, to avoid traps and duplication, to ensure a lack of support in one policy area does not undermine the operation

of another, and to maximise social mobility. Policy initiatives, separately and collectively, need to recognise the objectives of all spheres, avoiding the prioritisation of one to the detriment or the exclusion of others. Individuals may have different objectives for using a good or service. They may have objectives beyond use of that good or service which, if not accommodated, compromise engagement with it, or reduce its usefulness. Moreover, some services, such as community care services or support for a chronic health condition, do not necessarily have an end point. Others do, such as acute health-care or employment services. Either way, if welfare provision is intended to build or support capacity to participate in wider processes and networks, there needs to be a firm focus on these, not just at the end of the welfare delivery process but throughout.

The relevant (to the policy issue) features of geographical or spatially-defined areas need to be ascertained. These might include demographic profile, wealth-levels, labour market composition, cultural traditions, rurality and transport infrastructure, etc. Commonalities and differences between areas can then be identified, indicating where one and the same approach is required, and where a different approach will be needed to equalise outcomes. This signals what policy, or aspects of policy, need to be devolved downwards.

The socio-cultural conditions, or transactional infrastructure, in or through which processes are conducted can provide barriers at each stage of a process. Institutions therefore need to take concerted action to challenge assumptions, eliminate communication, environmental and transport barriers, and maximise the flexibility of timing. Wherever possible, adjustments should be made to standard practice in preference to potentially stigmatising special arrangements for individuals.

Process

Social inclusion means inclusion into all spheres, many networks and/ or groups. Individuals have many characteristics, although which takes prominence can depend on objectives and setting. Each person can both be allocated to one or more broad social categories and will have a unique history, blend of characteristics, circumstances, experiences and aspirations. For each social category based around a shared characteristic, it is possible to associate particular needs and barriers that all members are likely to encounter when seeking to participate in a given setting. Such barriers are usually referred to as 'structural'. To address them requires a shift across the board in standard policy design and delivery. However,

individuals have many characteristics, settings too can take many forms, and both are located and understood within variable socio-cultural contexts. Policy which distributes on the basis of membership of one social category a standardised good to meet a standardised need within a standardised setting is likely to provide a poor match. Policy design therefore also needs to enable flexibility beyond the broad category/ good/ need/ setting. This may imply a two-stage assessment (firstly into social category, then personalised), or scope for geographical variation. The starting point is a needs analysis. It is important to consider whether needs are group or setting specific, or whether they have wider application. If so, the policy design should vary accordingly.

While the meaning and purpose of the good has to be agreed by macro-level framers/ those responsible for generating the good, there can be flexibility over how it is interpreted/ realised. In effect, this means framers avoiding being unnecessarily over-prescriptive, leaving the specifics to recipients. For example, it is acknowledged that disabled people, or people bringing up children, will incur additional expenditure to meet equivalent standards of living of non-disabled people and childless people respectively. Instead of specifying minutely all possible permutations, costing each and assessing for each, it might be possible to pay a generic benefit which can be used in different ways towards those extra costs. An individualised second stage might allow for additions in the event that individuals for specific reasons incur significantly greater costs. Alternatively, a menu of options (potential areas of cost) could allow selections to be made according to individual needs.

While flexibility and empowerment are important to promoting inclusion, if they are to be socially and personally effective, they need moral justification. For redistribution to be tolerated by those responsible for funding it, recipients need to demonstrate desert to their satisfaction. The social case can be made on various grounds: the unacceptability of poverty in a civilised society; that expenditure on particular groups brings wider collective benefits; that today's tax-payers have needed/ used welfare provision in the past, could need it at any point and will again in future; that recipients are making active efforts to improve their situation, etc. From recipients' perspectives, there need to be positive reasons for engagement with welfare services as a means to wider participation, not as an end in itself.

Social mobility is necessary if people are to be enabled to move between settings, exercise autonomy and choice. Settings may be contemporaneous – work, home, leisure, geographical areas – or life-cycle related, i.e. connected to age. Life-changes need to be supported to

prevent immobility or breakdown into chaos. Policy which is inappropriately 'setting specific' (because needs traverse settings) reduces mobility and scope for inclusion into new settings. If distribution is incapacity-specific (i.e. hinges on negative currency), this militates against acquisition of capacity (positive currency), and requires the affirmation of negative currency, contrary to transactional needs. Instead of measuring incapacity, the focus should be on measuring potential or what would be needed to fulfil capabilities. This entails an emphasis on the identification of barriers and action to remove them rather than confirmation and reinforcement of personal incapacity. The more generic needs are, the more they can be shown to cross-setting and cross-category, the greater the reduction in stigma and improvement in social mobility.

Potential for connections to new networks may need to be identified and exploited; attachment to existing networks may need to be preserved. Barriers unnecessarily preventing access or blocking mobility therefore have to be removed. Policy might also be proactive in promoting connections with new networks and processes, perhaps through events bringing together different parties, or through supporting trial or taster sessions to build the confidence of both. Where a move from one setting to another is to be facilitated, or existing links preserved, the socio-cultural context, processes and individual capacity associated with each may need to be adjusted. To preserve, expand or join new networks, requires the melding of the objectives, needs and constraints of one party with those of another. It necessitates intervention into the processes of the other. An understanding of those processes – and the identification of scope for adjustment - will hence be beneficial.

If goods and services are to be targeted appropriately, criteria and associated indicators require careful consideration. To assign people to broad social categories identifying broad or generic needs is likely to be significantly less taxing than a minute matching process. Moreover, as discussed, there are limits beyond which indicators become less reliable. Coupled with the degree of intrusion into privacy that may accompany precise matching, this reinforces the notion that, wherever possible, precise matching should be left to recipients. However, to exercise choice recipients too need access to reliable indicators of the goods and services from which selection can be made. Again, there are likely to be limitations to the specificity that indicators can convey, particularly regarding complex products.

If appropriate policy design hinges on the accurate recognition of social barriers and needs, there need to be mechanisms to enable them to be identified, not just for assessors but also

macro-level framers. One approach is to involve recipients and their representatives in macro-level framing and design of the distributive process, seeking advice on the causes and definitions of needs and barriers, and thoughts on how to address them. It means opening up policymaking institutions, 'embedding' institutions into the community and 'embedding' user-groups into decision-making. This serves to improve communications between levels. To seek and convey feed-back from recipients on the good and/ or the process constitutes another mechanism. In addition, a transparent process, with clear standards or benchmarks and redress if these are not met, adds to empowerment. Taken together, better communications should serve to build trust, confidence and predictability for all concerned through increasing understanding of each other's objectives, constraints and support needs.

Regarding delivery, there is a need to make relationships between recipients and assessors/ providers more symmetrical – not that powers, level of intrusion, etc should be directly mirrored, but to promote 'complex symmetry'. Trust is compromised where assessors are required both to support and to police recipients. Moreover, recipient should always be prepared with information and advice beforehand, again to increase predictability and empowerment, and to help avoid instances of 'loss of face'. To avoid encroachment into personal territory it may sometimes be possible to devolve to the recipient the precise matching of need to good. Recipient choice and control over the service provider, trust and predictability, are likely to be particularly significant, particularly where encroachment is unavoidable.

Support for individuals

Although there is much that can be done to empower recipients by designing and delivering policy as described, unless they have the capacity and the skills to assume responsibilities within the process, empowerment will remain a token gesture. Capacity-building may therefore be necessary if recipients are to know how to play an active part within the process of welfare design and delivery (to have an input to framing, self-manage, make choices, etc) as well as beyond. Indeed, while welfare provision contributes to capacity-building for wider participation, capacity-building to participate actively in welfare provision may also be necessary, and have wider application.

Support can be divided into interlinked types. There may be capacity-building in the form of training to give people new skills, or enhance existing ones. Although acquiring skills can in

itself boost confidence, without some degree of confidence beforehand in the quality of programmes and capacity to benefit from them (i.e. ‘profitable exchange pay-offs’), opportunities to acquire skills may not be pursued. Confidence to participate in the process and beyond needs to be addressed throughout. Mechanisms include peer support, mentoring, independent advocacy and access to expert (but accessible) advice and information. Policy therefore needs to focus on strengthening peer group networks as well as opening up access to new networks. Again, trial runs in a new setting, to try out new skills, etc, might well serve to boost confidence.

Table 5: An inclusive policy framework

	Actions:
Socio-cultural context	
	Awareness and accommodation of different objectives and processes Focus on wider participation, transition and connection points Geographical differences and devolution Removal of barriers in transactional infrastructure
Process	
Framing	User need as starting point for analysis of commonality and difference Ensure moral justification Remove unnecessary setting and characteristic-specific criteria Involve external stakeholders, particularly recipients Carry out impact assessments Wherever possible devolve framing to recipients to achieve a precise match with individual needs
Access	‘One-stop-shop’ models – common point of access for various services to meet a likely cluster of needs Information to prospective users about what to expect in advance
Assessment	Training for assessors Social category (structural) and individual (personal) Quality of face-to-face interaction
Outcomes	Monitor and evaluate against standards and targets Feed-back from recipients to inform framing Scope for recipients to challenge outcome
Support to individuals	
	Training Tasters/ Trials Peer group support Advice services Independent advocacy Mentoring

This can be used as a basis for assessing any welfare strategy or policy initiative and for identifying measures to increase inclusivity and empowerment. Although the sorts of actions proposed are familiar to particular areas of policy, taken as an overall approach there are some significant implications for policy design and delivery, both at an overall strategic level, and with regard to individual policy initiatives. An example of how this approach can be applied to strategy is given in the following table, which summarises what the implications appear to be for health service strategy. Examples of the implications for particular policy initiatives are discussed in section 4 below.

Table 6: Implications for health-care strategy

	Actions:	Implications:
Socio-cultural context		
	Different objectives & processes accommodated	Acknowledgement of different objectives for using health-care services. Interaction with other policies and processes, e.g. benefits, child-care, housing, transport, education, community care, etc, analysed and accommodated to avoid traps and inequities.
	Focus on wider participation, transition, connection points	Existing connections preserved, with employers, education, family and community, and proactively created or re-established where unavoidably broken, e.g. GPs to promote re/engagement with labour market where possible, not just confirm incapacity.
	Geographical differences and devolution	Links between ill-health and poverty – maybe geographical concentrations. Access to comprehensive, high quality services required throughout (avoidance of ‘post-code lotteries), but different actions may be necessary to achieve this in different locations.
	Removal of barriers in transactional infrastructure	Questioning of assumptions, accessibility of premises and transport, information in different formats, availability of interpreters, avoidance of jargon, flexibility in appointment times, etc.
Process		
Framing	Need as basis for analysis of commonality and difference	Services and resource allocations driven by health needs not social categories or geographical location where un-related to need,
	Ensure moral justification	A service for all; everyone likely to need it at some point.
	Remove unnecessary setting and characteristic-specific criteria	Needs and risks may differ by setting (certain types of work) or characteristic (e.g. age); others remain constant – structure of services needs to reflect this to avoid gaps & traps (e.g. between paediatric and adult provision).
	Involve external stakeholders, particularly recipients	Scope for patients/ prospective patients to have an input to health service delivery?
	Carry out impact assessments	Required by Public Sector Duties (PSDs).
	Devolution of framing to recipients	Difficulties due to specialist knowledge requirements, choice constraints due to inadequacy of indicators – guarantee of high national standards consequently becomes more important. But choice possible, e.g. of GP, when treatment occurs, etc.

Access	'One-stop-shop' models	Access to comprehensive health-care in one locations; siting health services with others; locating other services within health service environments, e.g. employment advisers in GP surgeries,
	Advance information to prospective users	Information on service procedures and personnel, routines, etc
Assessment	Training for assessors	Not just medical training, also race & disability awareness, links to other services, information giving, how to facilitate patient empowerment, avoidance of unnecessary intrusion, etc.
	Social category and individual	Identification of needs associated with social category but skills to identify individual combinations or needs and flexibility to respond.
	Quality of face-to-face interaction	Trust particularly important given personal nature of service. In terms of who treats the patient, continuity likely to be important; cultural or gender factors.
Outcomes	Monitor and evaluate against standards and targets	Target system well established, but to what extent do they reflect the key concerns of patients? Do they provide meaningful information?
	Feed-back from recipients to inform framing	Systems are set up for obtaining and using feedback from patients
	Scope for recipients to challenge outcome	Complaints procedures, reviews, etc.
Support to individuals		
	Training	Expert Patient Programmes, Condition Management Programmes so that the recipient has the knowledge & skills to manager own condition.
	Tasters/ Trials	Opportunities to visit hospitals/ wards before admittance? Try different GPs?
	Peer group support	Mechanisms to promote communication between people with the same medical condition, or using the same hospital/ GP practice, etc. Alcoholics Anonymous model? Role of voluntary sector?
	Advice services	Independent expert advice is made available.
	Independent advocacy	Needs to be widely available (currently mostly confined to mental health field)
	Mentoring	For people with chronic health conditions by people with the same condition.

Shaping mainstream policy

In general terms, individuals could be members of many groups or networks based around a multiplicity of possible points of commonality. When it comes to social policy, as discussed, a variety of social categories are possible based on factors like age, household composition, role (parent, informal carer, lone parent), impairment type or severity, work-status (employed, unemployed, economically inactive), income levels, geographical location, refugee status, aptitudes, or combinations of these. For area-based policy, factors will include demographic and income profiles. Policy interventions will be targeted on social categories so defined. The underlying premise is that needs are related to social category, i.e. that each category will have a distinct set of needs.

Instead of defining social categories, with all the attendant difficulties, it is possible to start by identifying overall social objectives, and the goods and capacities necessary to achieve them. In accordance with Sen's notion of capabilities, it may be possible to discern generic needs that ensue if people are to achieve those objectives. There may then be ways of designing and delivering provision to meet generic needs to make it accessible to people with diverse characteristics. This forms a basis for cross-social category alliances. In effect, the aim is to find new commonalities and *highest* common denominators. Having defined commonalities, it becomes possible to identify relevant differences. These may indeed be associated with the sorts of factors identified above. As it stands, the rationale for divisions seems arbitrary. If there are cross-cutting needs, it implies that artificial social strata have been invented by programmes which are unnecessarily characteristic or circumstance specific. Duplication may inadvertently be occurring. Unnecessary traps arise as people move from one category to another, or from one geographical location to another. To maximise social mobility, transition points need to be considered during the life-course and contemporaneously between settings (work, home, leisure, etc) and geographical areas.

It is not just a matter of different groups of individuals potentially having the same needs. Unnecessary barriers can be created where the same need is met by different sources of support. It may make sense to pool funding streams, particularly if needs are constant across settings, or geographical areas, yet different funding streams are setting-specific. This may also make sense where different needs are met by different funding streams, but needs cluster together, i.e. people who commonly have one need also commonly have a designated

series of others. Where these are met by separate agencies, there is scope for separate policies and processes to interact to create barriers.

There are thus a number of ways in which categories can be realigned so that each better reflects the needs of a larger majority. The boundaries of artificial silos can separate social category, funding stream, clusters of needs, and geographical areas. They might even separate the identity of each individual into multiple aspects, with different provision, providers, assessment procedures and programmes catering for particular barriers associated with a given feature. In effect, if policy fails to be joined up at a strategic level, inconsistencies, duplication, poor dovetailing of processes, etc are played out through the experiences of individual recipients (or sometimes their 'case managers'). It is left to them to do their best to remove barriers, and to negotiate gaps and traps. It introduces complexity, and can require repeatedly giving the same information to different agencies, or parts of one and the same agency. All this can disempower and deter.

This is not to deny that, once barriers are removed as described, it remains the case that some differences and associated needs will remain to be addressed. Additional needs or barriers may exist for particular groups or individuals. As repeatedly noted there are numerous limitations beyond which the mainstream cannot readily be expanded; there are constraints on adjustments of each of the three possible sites for intervention. There are a number of possible approaches to tackling this, depending on the nature of the difference. If it is possible to discern a social category (by characteristics) that has such needs, specialist provision or positive action targeted at that group is one solution. However, it may well be the case that individuals, or groups need specialist support in one respect, but share commonalities with generic service users in others, given that they will have many characteristics rather than just those requiring specialist intervention. It is these commonalities that enable them to be attached to the mainstream.

This suggests that 'the mainstream' can be shaped in various ways and that there are a number of possible shapes to policy design which, used appropriately, can serve to widen access. No one shape is intrinsically inclusive. The key is to match the model to the nature of the good to be distributed, the degree of commonality, and the location and type of difference, in needs and/ or environment. Each has to be viewed in conjunction with the policy framework for maximising the inclusion of diversity. Viewed against this, each has

strengths and weaknesses. To be inclusive and empowering, each should be seen as entailing a package of measures to shore up weaknesses.

Generic

A generic good, programme or service is appropriate in response to a widely held need, common to a broad category of people. There are minimal access criteria - a broadly defined generic or standard good is accessible to a broad social category. The good can then be used in diverse ways in keeping with its broad purpose or definition. Strengths of this design include its simplicity of purpose and assessment, the ease with which it can be communicated and understood, the lack of stigma associated with a broad category of recipients, and flexibility in terms of how each chooses to use or 'frame' the specifics of the good received. Potential weaknesses include imprecise targeting, although if the need is broad and generic, that should not be a problem. In situations where a sub-section of recipients have significantly more of the same need, either a series of standardised additions might be awarded, or there could be a second stage individualised assessment (although ensuring equitable treatment may be a concern regarding the latter). A further weakness may reside in the difficulty in ensuring that the good is used in accordance with its (albeit) broad purpose. Moreover, the great extent to which recipients assume responsibility for 'framing' the good *may* indicate the importance of support and capacity-building, depending on how specialist the nature of the need.

Examples of this shape include child benefit and, in some respects, direct payments, the latter explored in more detail below. Child benefit is inclusive in that it identifies a commonality across income and other groups (i.e. that all people with responsibility for child-rearing incur extra costs to achieve an equivalent standard of living of those without children). As a non-means-tested benefit it operates to bridge the poverty trap, smoothing the interface between benefit and earnings, thereby promoting social mobility from 'welfare to work'. Moral justification resides in the long-term collective interest in supporting the welfare of children. As benefit receipt merely testifies to responsibility for child-rearing rather than 'negative currency', there is a lack of stigma, prompting high take-up rates.

Modular

A 'modular' model consists of a common point of access through which a menu of options can be accessed. Options are standardised in terms of the need each provides for, but there could be geographical variation in the emphasis given to each. All options need to be designed to be as accessible as possible. The menu could include a mixture of generic and specialised options, allowing for many possible combinations. The model has significant potential for balancing equity with diversity: it allows for matching diverse combinations of characteristics and circumstances, yet preserves scope for equity through standardised options. Through offering a common access point and mixing (accessible) generic options with narrower specialist provision, stigma is reduced. It does, though, have its limitations. The potential for complexity, in the number of options and range of prospective recipients, requires highly skilled assessors and empowered, informed recipients. It is possible, but complex, to make comparisons to check that treatment is equitable and to enforce assessor accountability. Diversity can be accommodated up to a point through mixing options, but there is a limit to how many standardised options realistically can be juggled, and hence the extent to which diversity can be matched.

Examples of policy broadly conforms to this model, although not necessarily appropriately or effectively, include the Building on New Deals (BoND) strategy (explored below) and Disability Living Allowance (DLA). The latter is accessed via one assessment procedure and consists of three levels of 'care component' and two levels of 'mobility component'. Which level of which component is/ are awarded depends on the fulfilment of criteria intended to demonstrate the extent of needs.

Devolved and umbrella

This model has two variations. It arises where there is a common aim, and over-arching strategy, but distinct approaches per social category or geographical area, reflecting differences (priorities, needs, etc) between groups or geographical areas respectively. This is appropriate where structural barriers exist affecting all with a given characteristic, but not those without it, or where there are significant differences in local socio-cultural conditions. The dangers of this model are that it can reinforce silos, leading to failure to spot commonalities and generic needs across groups or areas. In the latter case it can lead to inequalities between areas, so that what a person gets depends on where they live rather than

other factors. On a more positive note, where different approaches are taken to meeting the same needs, there is scope for innovation, exchange of ideas and dissemination of good practice. Issues remain, though, concerning the potential for traps preventing social mobility. If divisions are by social category, the multiple aspects to identity still require recognition.

Examples of an ‘umbrella’ model include the New Deals targeted at specific groups (discussed below) and anti-discrimination legislation, although in both cases an over-arching framework is imputed rather than explicit. Examples of a devolved model would include community care services, education services, i.e. where there is national framework within which localised variation occurs.

Regarding anti-discrimination rights, it is notable that differences occur between the legislation for different groups. For example, all are covered by sex and race legislation, but only disabled people (as legally defined) by disability legislation. Related to this, positive discrimination is only legal on grounds of disability, and not other grounds. Discrimination on grounds of age, sexual orientation, or religion and belief is outlawed with regard to employment and vocational training. The Equality Act (2006) recently extended protection, prohibiting discrimination in the provision of goods and services on grounds of religion and belief and enabling similar provision to be made (via regulations) to outlaw discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation.

Anti-discrimination rights provide a classic example of how policy divides people into one-dimensional groups, ignoring the multiple aspects to identity. However, exploration is currently underway of bringing together the disparate group-based legislation into a single Act. It can be argued that access to employment, goods and services, etc are generic needs, as are human rights to freedom of movement, privacy, etc. The needs are generic; the actions required to meet them will vary significantly according to the environment, characteristics, and circumstances. It remains to be seen whether the proposed Single Equality Act continues along a group-based route or instead is structured around generic cross-group commonalities.

Personalisation

Action to address inclusion is based on assessment of individual needs and circumstances, and tailored very flexibly and specifically to meet them. There is no reference to, or comparison with, the response to others with similar characteristics or circumstances,

because each individual is seen as unique. A personalised approach could be argued to be 'mainstream', even universal, in as much as the standard approach is for everyone to get highly individualised treatment. However, the problems associated with a modular approach are accentuated here. There is no means of showing consistency, it could just as easily exacerbate inequality as redress it (although there is nothing to prevent additional monitoring of the progress of particular social categories against baseline data). Any discriminatory attitudes held by assessors are left unchecked. There is nothing against which to hold them accountable; no benchmarks against which to seek redress. While personalisation can be portrayed as a means of empowering individuals and allowing a precise match to needs, without national standards, independent advocacy and expert advice, it is the assessor who is empowered at the expense of the recipient. In practical terms, personalisation can take the form of pooling funding streams, either from different sources covering the same needs, or from different sources each meeting a particular need within a likely cluster. Pooled funding might be focused around an individual, or around a geographically defined area.

Examples include Employment Zones and, possibly, Individual Budgets (both discussed below).

Analysing policy initiatives

The following examples provide a more in-depth analysis of how the mainstream models, aspects and/ or combinations of them, translate into policy design. The inclusivity of each is also discussed, in accordance with the features set out in table 1.

Direct payments and 'individual budgets'

Direct payments were first introduced in The Community Care (Direct Payments) Act 1996. This enabled local authorities to make direct payments to disabled community care service users with which they could purchase assistance (usually personal assistance and sometimes equipment) in lieu of services provided by the local authority. The Health and Social Care Act 2001 (in Scotland, the Community Care and Health (Scotland) Act 2002) made it a duty to offer direct payments. Community care policy in Scotland is devolved to the Scottish Executive and, as in England, aspects are then devolved down to local authorities (e.g. what

sorts of needs can be covered, means tested charges towards payments, pay rates for personal assistants).

It now appears that direct payment policy is branching into different directions. The Scottish Executive announced on 29 January 2004, a 'phased roll out' of direct payments to non-disabled community care groups including older people, people fleeing domestic abuse, refugees, homeless people, ex-offenders, or those recovering from alcohol or drug dependency, (currently there is no timescale for this). In contrast, in a Prime Minister's Strategy Unit report published in January 2005, it was proposed to establish 'individual budgets', to personalise responses to need, promote choice and empowerment and support disabled people to help themselves. The idea is to pool existing budgets¹ for a range of support, including equipment, personal assistance, transport, adaptations and advocacy. Provision would take the form of cash or services, or a combination of both. The importance of support for recipients, e.g. through Centres for Independent Living, is stressed. The Scheme would be the same across England and probably Wales.

Direct payments as currently operated can be defined as a generic good, with some features of a 'devolved' model. They are available to a wide range of disabled people who have a great degree of control over how the service is 'framed', e.g. who provides assistance to do what and when. They are vastly more flexible than the alternative of local authority-provided services, where recipients typically have no choice even over what time they are assisted to get up in the morning, who bathes them, etc. The scope for invasion of 'core self' and loss of face in the provision of such services is clearly significant, underlining the importance of trust and user control. User accountability is maintained by the provision to social work departments of financial information, including invoices or PAYE records for assistants employed. There is a strong focus on capacity-building and support for recipients – and for social workers to promote the necessary cultural and power shifts (Witcher *et al.* 2000).

Mobility is impeded by the fact that while needs remain broadly constant, direct payments are not transferable between local authority areas. Means-tested charging policies can create barriers to work. Provision for personal assistance tends to be 'setting specific', so different schemes, budgets and assessments have to be undergone depending on, for example, whether the assistance occurs at home, in work or in education. Care needs are divided into 'personal', 'social' and 'nursing', again with different sources of provision and associated

restrictions. Transport, adaptations and advocacy are funded by a range of providers, although not via direct payments.

The development proposed by the Scottish Executive seems premised on the ‘commonality’ that various groups use community care services, leading to the introduction of an ‘umbrella’ model. However, there is no evidence that needs, objectives for service use, types of services required, and support needs to manage a direct payment, are similarly shared. Accountability issues too may differ – e.g. giving cash to people attempting to give up alcohol or drugs seems unhelpful and hard to justify to the wider public. In the context of distinct forms of service and potentially incompatible needs and objectives, to extend direct payments as a generic good would be counterproductive. More analysis is needed to determine if commonality in needs exists and, if so, where.

The proposal for individual budgets, by targeting a coherent cluster of needs on a country-wide basis, and removing setting-related constraints promises to address many of the currently prevalent social mobility barriers. It remains to be seen to what extent the budgets would be ‘modular’ (i.e. comprised of a series of distinct options, restrictions and associated budgets) or ‘personalised’ (pooled budgets which can be spent entirely flexibly). Either way, it will be vitally important that independent support and capacity-building is available. Benchmarks, such as national standards, will need to be established along with systems of challenge and redress, if empowerment is to be achieved. Monitoring by impairment group and geographical location would be necessary to ensure equality. Some budgets to be pooled are GB or UK-wide and it remains to be seen whether they will continue as now in Scotland, given that the Scottish Executive is under no obligation to introduce Individual Budgets.

New Deals and ‘Building on New Deals’ (BoND)

Since coming into power in 1997, the New Labour government has established a plethora of New Deal (ND) programmes to move people from welfare to work. Most are targeted at specific social categories (defined by benefit receipt), such as young people, lone parents, or disabled people. There are also New Deals targeted on a particular profession (New Deal for Musicians), and geographical area (New Deal for Communities). Each social category ND has its own provisions. For example, the ND for Young People is mandatory after 6 months on jobseekers allowance, the ND 25 plus is mandatory after 18 months, while the ND 50 plus is voluntary after 6 months on benefits including certain disability benefits or pension

credit. Most NDs are delivered by Jobcentre Plus Personal Advisers, but the ND for disabled people is delivered via a network of voluntary or private-sector job-brokers. The latter is voluntary and can be accessed at any point by people in receipt of a variety of disability benefit. The ND for lone parents provides assistance to find and organise child-care and, along with the ND for disabled people, continues to provide support and advice after entrance into employment. An Advisor Discretion Fund was introduced in 2001 for all ND recipients, which Personal Advisers can draw upon to meet costs such as essential work clothes. All NDs are intended to provide assistance with jobsearch, making applications, interview skills, drawing up action plans, etc.

The Building on New Deals (BoND) strategy published in 2004 marked a sea-change. National standards were to be complemented with flexibility regarding access and eligibility, and local variation. Instead of separate NDs for each group, it proposed a generic menu from which selection could be made as appropriate to the individual concerned. Options – or modules - include jobsearch assistance, motivational assistance, employability skills (like self-presentation and team work), wage subsidies, work trials and in-work support. The Advisor Discretion Fund becomes a module. Skills training for local labour markets and specialist options for disabled people or those who are most disadvantaged also feature in the generic menu of options. All clients can access all options, irrespective of age or the benefit they get (although those on jobseekers allowance would normally wait six months as most leave benefit before then anyway).

Based on the core principles of rights and responsibilities, flexibility, devolution and discretion, accountability, targets and contestability, BoND is intended to give greater freedom to Personal Advisers and it is they who will have the final say. In addition, emphasis is given to employers as customers, and the importance of meeting their needs. Support would include coherent packages of recruitment and training support, a vacancy-taking service and a ‘Rapid Response Service’ when major redundancies occur. . The aim is “...to create a virtuous circle of local labour market demand, training to match, and Jobcentre Plus clients who also meet employers’ requirements” (2004, p31).

The design of the original New Deals can be characterised as an ‘umbrella’ model in that there was an over-arching goal to promote movement from welfare to work. Beyond that, though, separate silos were established around social categories. There was no geographical devolution to speak of – the New Deal for Communities being an entirely separate initiative

run by a different government department². There were elements of personalisation visible in the individual action plans, the freedom available, particularly to job-brokers, to tailor provision around individuals, and the 'Adviser Discretion Fund'.

BoND signals a recognition that generic needs traverse the previously established silos, and that identity has multiple aspects. This development can be characterised as a shift from an umbrella model to a modular approach. However, it also extends devolution to Jobcentre Plus District Managers, who would have some degree of choice over the modules to be offered, as well as to individual Personal Advisers. Devolution, coupled with the modular structure, also provides scope for greater individualisation, i.e. better matching to individual need. Despite this, BoND retains a national-level core framework concerning the procedures for claiming jobseekers allowance or other benefits, national-level standards and a generic menu of options, which may be amended subject to local requirements and the availability of alternative providers. The emphasis on employers demonstrates a concern with the interface between the ND programme and the wider environment; with the objectives, needs and constraints of clients and those with whom they need to connect.

BoND scores better on inclusivity than the old NDs with regard to the identification of commonalities which traverse traditional social categories, the explicitly outward focus on building bridges to employers, scope to mix specialist with generic options, and the potential for a better match of service to the differing needs of each individual. However, the latter by the same token introduces some new potential weaknesses. While the national core framework and generic menu simplify matters, the combinations of options available are clearly considerable. Contestability threatens further complication by generating a welter of providers. This poses challenges for monitoring against national standards and for ensuring that assessors have the requisite skills. In view of the increased onus on assessors to exercise judgement, rather than implement preordained processes and outcomes subject to benefit entitlement, the importance of high quality training is emphasised. Advisers need to be equipped to respond appropriately to diverse clients with diverse characteristics. They need to be sensitive to cultural and communication issues, and have the skills to facilitate the active participation of clients in decision-making processes.

The aim to empower Personal Advisers is writ large, as power is devolved downwards from the centre. However, there is danger that greater flexibility means that power is also devolved upwards from the recipient. Without clear benchmarks in the form of rights (i.e.

that a person with 'x' characteristics is entitled to 'y' provision) and courses of action open to negotiation, access to independent advocacy is acknowledged to be important for empowerment. Expert advice and peer support would also assist. While 'accountability' is declared a guiding principle, greater consideration needs to be given to how, and against what, clients are to hold Personal Advisers to account. Transparent national standards clearly have a role to play here, but mechanisms for challenge, complaint and/ or redress would strengthen accountability and hence client empowerment.

If the generic menu is to include a combination of 'core' modules and 'specialist' modules (for people with complex needs), core modules in particular need to be designed and delivered in ways which maximise accessibility. Although all modules can be seen as part of the mainstream menu, through maximising inclusion into core modules, the need for specialist modules should diminish. One way to look at this would be to cast each core module as a 'generic' good, as in the first shape for mainstream policy discussed above.

Employment Zones

There are 15 Employment Zones (EZs) in areas of particularly high long-term unemployment. Initially for people aged over 25 unemployed for over 12 months, they were subsequently extended to cover lone parents and younger unemployed people otherwise returning to ND. 'Early entry' can be possible for certain jobseekers allowance recipients facing particular disadvantage. Participation for lone parents is voluntary; mandatory for others. EZs are delivered by contractors, including (often) private-sector companies but also voluntary sector organisations and cross-sector partnerships. Initially one provider covered a given area. More recently (2004) multiple provider partnerships were introduced in larger areas.

Funds for training, Jobcentre Plus support and the equivalent of benefit are pooled to maximise flexibility. Advisers have a high level of discretion to design individually tailored programmes, to decide how much time to spend with a client, what kind of support to provide and how much to spend on each (within defined limits). Although they have a firm focus on work, they can fund driving lessons, clothes for work, household bills, etc, as well as provide 'hands-on' job-related assistance such as CV preparation. The same approach is usually taken regardless of social category. However, some providers are establishing special services for lone parents, due to the particular types and difficulties of barriers they face.

Recent evaluations of both sole (Griffiths and Jones 2005) and multiple providers (Hirst *et al.* 2006) showed that the personalised approach was welcomed, and preferred to that of Jobcentre Plus staff. This may primarily be due to the fact that EZ advisors have more funds to dispense, more time to spend with clients and are able to address indirect as well as direct barriers to work. However, seeing the same adviser every time, and the advisers' ability to relate to individuals, focus on customer aspirations, show respect, enthusiasm and commitment to finding them work, suggest a very different quality of face-to-face interaction. This was confirmed by the second stage of the sole provider evaluation, which showed that high levels of customer satisfaction were unrelated to spending levels or even successful job outcomes, but to the quality and content of the relationship with advisers, their accommodating and empathetic approach (Griffiths, Durkin and Mitchell 2006).

It is striking that high quality relationships here are a feature providers often from the private sector provision, while the public sector NDs score poorly. This may be unrelated to sector, instead reflecting discrepancies in other factors like the availability of resources (time and money), whether or not a person-centred approach is taken, and the scope to tackle wider barriers. Indeed, Hirst *et al.* (2006) remark that Jobcentre Plus staff had expressed an interest in joint training opportunities and workshops with external providers to see if they could use similar approaches in their own work.

In accordance with the 'inclusive' model, there was clear evidence that multiple providers were focusing on developing peer-group networks and the follow-on relationship with employers. 'Group work delivery' had been developed by some to encourage clients to work together, take more responsibility and in order to position them in social networks where they knew more people in work (Hirst *et al.* 2006). Most providers had specialist staff to work with employers, understand their recruitment needs, etc (Hirst *et al.* 2006). However, there was also evidence that the introduction of multiple providers had complicated and to some extent undermined relations with Jobcentre Plus. It also appeared that providers did not see the introduction of competition, which the transition to multiple providers engendered, as being the primary driver of performance and innovation, instead attributing this to the longer duration of contracts.

Comparing approaches to employment policy

Using the policy framework set out in table 1 it is possible to identify the strengths and weaknesses of a policy initiative and make comparisons between initiatives. The table below provides a brief summary of the three employment service initiatives discussed for comparative purposes. Information about what has occurred or what is intended is not always available. This presumably reflects the fact that policy and evaluations were not designed with an 'inclusive' model in mind: hence, consideration has not always been given to pertinent issues and information has not always been collected about them.

Table 7: Initiatives and implications – New Deals, BoND and Employment Zones

	Actions	New Deals	BoND	Employment Zones
Socio-cultural context				
	Different objectives & processes accommodated	Unclear that recipients' objectives for particular type of work are a key driver (and Employment Zone evidence suggests the opposite).	Commitment to flexibility suggests more scope to accommodate recipient preferences. Reference to National Child-care Strategy, but unclear if other objectives/ processes to be tackled.	Recipient aspirations a key driver. Barriers arising from other objectives and processes actively addressed.
	Focus on wider participation, transition, connection points	Narrow focus on paid work.	Narrow focus on paid work. Explicitly aiming to match clients to employers and meet employer needs. In work support an option.	Focus on 'work first'. Careful matching with employer and after-care service to promote sustainability.
	Geographical differences and devolution	Not explicitly included, though some possible via job-brokers?	Explicitly recognised and promoted	Sited in areas of particular disadvantage. Could decrease mobility to other areas? Powers devolved to individual advisers.
	Removal of barriers in transactional infrastructure	Not explicitly addressed. Will need to be addressed via Public Sector Duties.	Not explicitly addressed, but accessibility of core modules will be critically important. Addressed through the Public Sector Duties?	Not explicitly addressed. Procurement requirements of PSD may have knock-on impact on private sector practices.

	Actions	New Deals	BoND	Employment Zones
Process Framing				
	Need as basis for commonality and difference	Social categories rather than needs	Needs rather than social categories	Only available to certain social categories but individual needs-based thereafter. Advisers usually cover all categories. Moves to set up specialist lone parent services.
	Ensure moral justification	Compulsion for JSA recipients	Compulsion for JSA recipients	Targets for job entry and sustainability.
	Remove unnecessary setting and characteristic-specific criteria	Characteristic specific in apparently arbitrary ways	Multiple characteristics catered for. Local labour market-specific – appropriately	Separate lone parent provision necessary?
	Involve external stakeholders, particularly recipients, in framing overall good/ service	Not addressed but Jobcentre Plus. Will need to address in context of PSD	Not addressed but Jobcentre Plus will need to address in context of PSD	Not addressed
	Carry out impact assessments	N/A (carried out before finalising policy and implementation)	Need to be carried out. Pilots could assist?	N/A (carried out before finalising policy and implementation). Could be done for other client groups?
	Devolution of framing to recipients	Participation in the development of action plans, but limited flexibility.	Participation in developing action plans. Greater flexibility. Without safeguards, greater adviser discretion could reduce recipients' say.	Participation in the development of action plans, driven by recipients' preferences.

	Actions	New Deals	BoND	Employment Zones
Access	'One-stop-shop' models	No	One access point for multiple options, but direct barriers to work only?	Address direct and indirect barriers to work. Links to other service providers?
	Advance information to prospective users	Unclear	Not addressed	Unclear
Assessment	Training for assessors	Unclear	Particularly important in view of enhanced discretion and potential diversity of clients	Unclear
	Social category <i>and</i> individual flexibility	Social category – restrictions on individual flexibility	Categories need-based rather than social; individual flexibility	Although access determined by social category, mostly generalist response – emphasis on individual flexibility.
	Quality of face-to-face interaction	Can be poor - compromised by resource pressures?	Unclear at this stage	Evaluations indicate that very high
	Monitor and evaluate against standards and targets	?	National standards feature.	Targets for providers
Outcomes	Feed-back from recipients to inform framing	Not addressed, though may be picked up in evaluations	Not addressed	Not addressed, though may be picked up in evaluations.
	Scope for recipients to challenge outcome	Unclear	Unclear – possible given clarity re options available	Unclear – difficult without benchmarks

	Actions	New Deals	BoND	Employment Zones
Support to individuals				
	Training	Gateways	Skills and employability options; training to meet local labour market needs	Focus on 'work first' rather than training.
	Tasters/ Trials	Possible	Explicitly included in the generic menu	Possible, but focus on 'work first'
	Peer group support	Not addressed	Not addressed	Addressed by some multiple providers
	Advice services	Not addressed	Not addressed	Not addressed
	Independent advocacy	Not addressed	Importance acknowledged	Not addressed
	Mentoring	Not addressed	Not addressed	Not addressed

As the above illustrates, making use of the framework for an ‘inclusive model’ enables systematic comparisons to be made and conclusions drawn. Importantly, given the emphasis in this thesis on raising awareness and challenging unquestioned assumptions, it reveals issues that might otherwise be overlooked. For example, regarding socio-cultural context, neither the current New Deals nor BoND take a holistic approach and neither are explicitly driven by the client’s aspirations. Barriers to transactional infrastructure are not addressed by any of the three, but all will be required to do so by a ‘dovetailing’ area of policy, namely the Public Sector Duties. It is not necessarily the case that each area of policy must fulfil every criteria on its own. However, if not, consideration needs to be given to whether other adjacent policies do, and how smooth the interface between them is.

All three are weak on ‘support to individuals’, although this receives limited recognition in the BoND strategy, and some multiple providers of EZ have recognised the role of peer support. Evidence regarding the latter also suggests that whether a service is provided by private, voluntary or public sector is not the issue, but the quality of the relationship with assessors. Neither is the introduction of competition necessarily a means to promote innovation – sometimes long-term stability is what it takes for providers to learn from experience and have the confidence to take risks. In summary, while there are significant variations between the three, in all cases it is possible to specify where more could be done to promote the inclusion of diversity on a basis of empowerment.

¹ Budgets to be pooled are likely to include community care, Independent Living Funds, Disabled Facilities Grant, Family Fund and Access to Work, and probably Disabled Students Allowance and health budgets for adaptations and equipment.

² The New Deal for Communities is run by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister while the others are run by the Department for Work and Pensions.

Chapter 10: Conclusion

Meeting the research aim

At the beginning of this thesis, attention was drawn to features of the current socio-cultural context, why they signalled the need for a new approach. It described the challenges to be confronted in developing a theoretical framework to maximise the inclusion of people with diverse characteristics into mainstream society, on a basis of empowerment rather than enforced assimilation. To meet that research aim and address those challenges, this thesis has ranged from the depths of abstract theory through to the development of practical tools to steer policy development, charting the path from one to the other. The journey led from macro to meso to micro-level, signposting issues, exploring interconnections and addressing dilemmas along the way. It traversed different academic areas of study in the quest to develop the 'richest possible synthesis' (Askonas 2000) of relevant material. This methodology, the synthesising of themes across different literatures and disciplines, echoed the quest to find a theoretical basis for the richest possible social synthesis. Both methodology and research aim entailed the breaching of artificial boundaries (between disciplines or social categories respectively), the identification of commonalities and coherence amidst complexity, and enrichment through the cross-fertilisation of different perspectives.

Hopefully we have now arrived at the intended destination: a theoretical framework fit for the current and likely future socio-cultural context, showing how social diversity, mobility and complexity can be rendered inclusive and cohesive. In so doing, it has proven useful to reframe the public versus private sector debate, setting out a new model for the reform of welfare policies and institutions. Inevitably in such a wide-ranging thesis, many potential avenues for further exploration were discovered. Quite possible, additional insights for social policy could be distilled from the theoretical framework. Within the limited space available it proved necessary to focus on what appeared key to the task. However, the framework should provide an array of options for future research, both theoretical and empirical.

An overview of key themes and distance travelled

The raw materials used to develop the theoretical framework were the key themes extracted from current bodies of theory on disadvantage and exclusion. The first challenge was to consider each separately, attempt to find coherence between key themes and align them in accordance with the research goal. To do so necessitated some degree of theory development in each area. It became clear that each area encompassed themes relevant to other areas which the latter had often not taken on board. Each area too had something specific to contribute.

It was then a matter of considering how themes could be positioned in relation to each other within a common framework. There were recurrent indications that the social (particularly distributive) processes and relationships through which individuals are attached to wider society might constitute a fruitful line of inquiry. Drawing particularly on the discrimination literature, three possible sites for investigation were identified: macro-level socio-cultural context; meso-level processes, and micro-level capacity, enactment and identity. These formed the bare bones on which to flesh out a theoretical framework.

In the course of theory development in section 2, it was necessary to consider the elements of which the research aim was comprised, i.e. inclusion, diversity, society, mainstream, and empowerment. Various tensions and dilemmas arose: how both to respect the diversity of individual identities and keep track of inequalities between social categories; how to secure social cohesion while promoting the expression of diversity and social mobility, to name but two. The extent of room for manoeuvre, limitations and constraints to the widening of the mainstream and to empowerment were noted throughout. Limitations were of different types: logically unavoidable; inevitable consequences contingent on other factors, or artificially constructed, perhaps to generate profit or control behaviour.

To understand social inclusion entailed consideration of the nature of inclusion and of what inclusion was into. It was proposed that it could best be construed as inclusion into social processes through the relationships required to enact them. Processes are structured and delivered through institutions located at different societal levels. Each is likely primarily to be concerned with a particular macro-level objective, forming part of its sphere of operation. Inclusion pertains to dimensions and levels. Social mobility, to move between settings, is

implicit to inclusion. Settings may change 'vertically' (i.e. chronologically) through the life-course and 'horizontally' (contemporaneously) at any point during the life-course. The challenge for social policy becomes to open up access and smooth points of transition.

It was therefore necessary to identify and address the factors that can compromise inclusion. These were shown to arise at macro, meso and micro levels and at each of the three sites for intervention. They include inaccessible transactional infrastructure, poor dovetailing of processes, unnecessarily rigid access criteria, inadequate indicators for the purposes of assessment, artificially constructed scarcity, insufficient material resources or skills, and invasive, disempowering, stigmatising interactions. The prospect of such interactions provides incentives to disengagement. The experience of them reinforces exclusion.

If policy singling out a group for special (i.e. different) treatment is de facto exclusive, the challenge becomes how to avoid 'including by excluding' people with aspirations, needs, cultural norms, combinations of characteristics and circumstances, which differ from the majority. To deny those differences would amount to, and result in, oppressive exclusion. This points to the importance of how 'mainstream' is conceptualised, and its implications when applied to society and social policy design.

To be part of 'the mainstream' implies having something in common with a majority. To widen the mainstream thus entails finding uniting points of commonality. Instead of separating out the population into discrete one-dimensional social categories, it is important to acknowledge the multiple characteristics and circumstances of which identities are composed. It follows that each individual has access to multiple peer groups, and that there are many possible points of commonality and hence options for attachment. Inclusion does not have to be as simple as one or more points of commonality uniting the majority, but can be achieved through the existence of many potential points of commonality through which individuals can be 'attached'. It is helpful to envisage society as a shifting mass of relationship networks, formed around shared points of commonality

Generic features can emerge once the artificial boundaries of social categories are breached - not that the latter are redundant - they remain important devices for ensuring that people with a certain characteristic are not disproportionately disadvantaged. Furthermore, 'weak tie bridges'

between peer groups, enabling mutual enrichment, should play a key role in promoting social cohesion, accommodating – and valuing - diversity.

Structurally, society can accommodate diversity within a macro-level framework of commonality, devolving powers down the levels - though confining it to the lowest level – the private sphere – is once again to exclude. Social policy design can accommodate diversity, promote social mobility and forge cross-group alliances by taking a needs analysis as its starting point. Subject to the nature of needs, different shapes of ‘mainstream’ were indicated, discussed and illustrated. Each had strengths and weaknesses when viewed in conjunction with the inclusive policy framework.

Empowerment and inclusion are symbiotically connected. Disempowerment restricts the expression of diversity, provokes disengagement, or engagement through oppressing of certain aspects of identity and/ or passivity. By eroding autonomy, personal responsibility and decision-making capacity, it deprives people of confidence and experience, thereby reinforcing dependence. It can mean that people already ill-equipped to forge new social connections become even less well-equipped. If the social meaning of welfare provision revolved around promoting inclusion and empowering disadvantaged people, it is clearly important that its design and delivery do not inadvertently exacerbate exclusion and disempowerment. Empowerment is an intrinsic part of successful outcomes, if the aim is to increase resources for participation.

Inequality emerged as a recurrent theme throughout. People with diverse characteristics will be excluded unless diversity is more equally valued. The notion of complex equality is very helpful as a theoretical device for squaring the diversity/ equality circle. The significance for inclusion of greater income equality depends on such factors as the extent to which goods and services are centrally funded and free at the point of use. Greater equality of power is required if disempowerment is not to lead to disengagement. Especially in the context of personalisation, the exclusion of people with a particular but irrelevant (to the purpose of the good) characteristic will only be detectable by monitoring equality between characteristic-based groups.

The theoretical framework enables conclusions to be drawn about the types of society, processes and relationships most likely to be conducive to inclusion on the desired basis. For example, an inclusive society would be one in which many socio-cultural objectives are recognised and

commonly valued, and consequently so too are different goods and currencies. Cultural norms value difference *and* commonalities, challenge rather than passively accept stereotypes. Competition is diffused as people pursue different objectives, types of good and currency. Status can be achieved in various ways. Social mobility is supported by policy which is rationalised to remove unnecessary complexity and dovetailed to avoid gaps and traps. Transactional infrastructure is accessible as standard.

In an inclusive distributive process the general social meaning and purpose of the good are unambiguous while allowing for many alternative forms of expression. There is maximum flexibility in the ways available to achieve the purpose of the good and this is reflected in access criteria. Attempts are made to minimise reliance on unreliable indicators of identity, and to avoid stereotypical judgements. Where possible, the exact framing of the good to meet individual needs is devolved to recipients in order to achieve a precise match. Recipients receive support to engage in the process. Rights, national standards, accountability and redress further help to redress power imbalances between provider and recipient. The nature of the networks leading to and from welfare institutions require particular consideration, if disincentives to take up services are to be avoided and the capacity of welfare institutions to play a pivotal role in promoting wider societal inclusion is to be realised. Otherwise, they cease to be routes to inclusion and instead become dead-ends, this itself acting as a disincentive to engagement.

It is debatable whether safe conclusions can be drawn about the components to a social relationship that would be normatively inclusive, as relationships will be context-dependent. That said, inclusive relationships are likely to feature (complex) symmetries of various kinds, respect for privacy, trust, predictability and transparency about motivations. An awareness of the informal rituals of interaction, and sensitivity to cultural variations, should further be conducive to the engagement of diverse people.

The contribution of this thesis

Overview

While developing theory for its own sake may be a fascinating intellectual exercise, for it to be worthwhile it needs to 'add value' elsewhere, providing a better explanation of a phenomenon, enhancing understanding in order to steer action more appropriately and strategically. For theory to be valuable it clearly needs to be coherent. However, as suggested in the opening chapter, cogency should not be achieved by imposing one possible explanation when many are possible; neither should it be so loose that it leaves everything wide open to myriad conflicting, if equally plausible, explanations. Theory can usefully expose limitations and dilemmas and as a precursor to exploring strategies for achieving optimum outcomes within those confines. It can challenge false, unquestioned assumptions, clearing away attitudinal obstacles in order to permit greater objectivity and more accurate recognition. It can offer new paradigms which provide more apposite ways of making sense of phenomena. In sum, theory needs to provide a clear steer but cannot obviate the need for, sometimes difficult, judgements to be made about the best way to proceed (indeed, judgements can be a lot easier when based on short-cut assumptions: this, of course, does not make them sound). These are the criteria which this thesis has endeavoured to meet.

The main task of this thesis was to progress social theory on the currently confused yet critically important subject of social inclusion. By extracting areas of coherence between existing theoretical themes around disadvantage and exclusion it became possible to construct a new fleshed out theoretical framework. The ambit of the thesis was therefore primarily theoretical. However, with the above in mind, the intention was that this framework should be capable of providing a clear steer for social policy, in particular welfare policy. This thesis set out to unpack the relationship of theory to policy and to show how the former can provide a steer for the latter. It tracked the often poorly signposted journey up through different levels of theory, showing how each infuses another, and how different issues emerge at macro, meso and micro levels. It is shown how theory throws up issues for policy which otherwise could easily be overlooked. It has also signalled how theoretical incoherence can be reproduced as policy incoherence, leaving recipients (or professionals charged with co-ordination) to make sense of it all. The thesis culminated in the development of an 'inclusive' model for social policy, which was shown could provide a clear steer to the formation of welfare strategy and the assessment of policy initiatives. Furthermore, this provided a fresh starting point to the private versus public sector debate, given that neither was shown to be *necessarily* inclusive or empowering in the terms defined.

Theory

In the course of reviewing existing theory as preparation for developing an over-arching framework, some development of particular areas of theory was required. Discussion of social justice concluded with the reframing of the connection between distributive and recognition paradigms, to the effect that distributive justice can only be achieved through recognition, and recognition extended well beyond 'cultural' matters. This in turn was subsumed under a vision for social justice as the inclusion of diversity, for which both a just distribution of goods and the valuing of difference are required. It was proposed that understanding of distributive justice should be extended to encompass the closeness of the fit between the good and needs or aspirations, while recognition in the form of awareness was a necessary precursor to valuing difference.

The mish-mash of concepts, definitions and measurements found in poverty debates was disentangled into discourses of general deprivation, methods of quantifying minimum income levels and life-styles, and capabilities. The increasing emphasis on symbolic/ relational aspects of poverty could be positioned either as integral to the concept of poverty, or as discrimination experienced by people on grounds of poverty, in much the same way that discrimination may be experienced on other grounds. While material hardship and discrimination, separately or in combination, could cause exclusion, if a clear steer to policy is to be forthcoming it made sense to keep them conceptually distinct.

Exploration of the group-based literatures on discrimination revealed the existence of many common themes and others which, though arising only in one literature, had clear implications beyond. It proved possible to combine them into the beginnings of a generic model of discrimination; a project with potential for further development. In the context of the new Commission for Equality and Human Rights such an exercise might prove particularly timely.

Despite – if not because of – the widely acknowledged confusion of themes within social exclusion theory, it became feasible to sketch out the range of issues with which an over-arching framework would need to engage. The literature furnished an abundance of components for consideration as possible pieces to the jigsaw. It was suggested that it might provide an arena encompassing poverty *and* discrimination, distribution *and* cultural recognition, structure *and*

agency, in which exploration of links between them might be facilitated. The particular emphasis on processes and social relationships, a theme discernible though significantly underdeveloped in other literatures, suggested a way forward.

'Fit' with the wider theoretical context

In terms of how the theoretical framework fits with broader sociological theory, it could be said to negotiate the structure/ agency divide by arguing that structures, as in institutions and formalised processes, should seek to empower individuals to express their agency to 'frame' the good they receive, and to exert influence over structures through effective mechanisms for communication, feedback and redress. If, as Giddens broadly contends (1984), structures are engendered by, and engender, the routinised actions of actors, it is important to recognise that the 'routinised actions' entailed by relationships with welfare institutions are the outcome of interactions between differently placed actors. At one extreme, macro-level framers dictate the routinised actions of micro-level recipients, structuring ritualised relationships between assessors and recipients and defining the good to be distributed. Therefore, structures are not necessarily created (or changed) by the actions of *micro*-level actors although structures may be expressed and reproduced through them. The scope for micro-level actors to amend and cause structures to evolve depends on how fluid or fixed structures are. The more fluid, the greater potential there is to include diversity on a basis of empowerment – up to a certain point, beyond which the coherence of the process disintegrates.

A further approach, closer to Parsons' concerns, connects structure to agency through the representation of spheres as macro level objectives and delivery mechanisms, features of meso-level processes and the potential objectives and actions of micro-level actors (given the scope to absorb cultural norms and values to the extent that it becomes difficult to recognise them). Clearly, the theoretical framework has been developed with a particular goal in mind. To what extent the approach taken might serve as a general theory – applicable to a wide range of goals – lies beyond the purview of this thesis. Certainly, it has broken away from any notion that social cohesion (or integration) must be contingent on shared values – indeed it expressly set out to consider alternatives in view of the objective of accommodating diversity.

The theoretical framework acknowledges and accommodates an ever-changing kaleidoscope of fragmentation and complexity. However, unlike postmodernist theory, it does not conclude that all attempts at constructing metanarratives are thus either futile or oppressively 'totalising'. Instead it argues that emerging differences can simultaneously provide fresh focus for synthesis around points of commonality. The former compels the latter, if the concern is social inclusion and cohesion. Sometimes complexity is created by artificial silos which preserve and promote complexity, preventing scope for rationalisation and simplification from being identified. The reframing of social categories is ongoing, its pace dictated by the pace of social mobility, external/ environmental change, emerging differences and commonalities. Some categories are more provisional than others, perhaps reflecting levels of identity and the mutability of certain characteristics, including behaviours. Many categories co-exist. Which are significant depends on the socio-cultural context and objectives. To the dismay of postmodernists, this may indeed constitute a new metanarrative. If so, it is one purposefully aiming to maximise the scope for difference as well as possible points of commonality. Theoretical and social coherence are not abandoned, but rendered more flexible.

Further conclusions are that structures need to be defined as much as possible by the actions of micro-level actors, that they should permit the maximum variation in 'routinised' actions; the maximum being defined as the point at which variations become so great that structures lose any discernible form. Imbalances in the dominance of spheres can be sustained up to a certain point, but all need to be present to a certain degree or the construction shatters and no objectives can be achieved (for any objective requires the contribution of others). Beyond a tightly defined process there is room to manoeuvre until it becomes so fluid that it loses coherence. To maximise the inclusion of diversity means pitching as close to the point of collapse as possible without going over it.

Policy and practice

The theoretical framework was shown to have many implications for policy and attention was drawn to these throughout section 2. When consolidated into an 'inclusive' model, a clear steer for policy emerged. Inevitably this necessitated a degree of simplification. To retain sight of the deeper theoretical context, of how and why the model came into being, would enhance the

aptitude with which it is applied. Understanding the intentions behind the model should also promote creativity in developing new ways to achieve them.

Without rehearsing anew the many specific issues and possible courses of action identified for policy and practice discussed in chapter 9, it is useful to highlight some key points. Firstly, as evaluations of Employment Zones appear to confirm, the issue is not which sector the provider is from, but instead concerns the nature of the interaction between provider and recipient and degree of flexibility in terms of what can be provided. This reaffirms the need for a new focus for debate about the reform of public services. It also stresses the importance of addressing the ‘personal conditions of interaction’; understanding the basic motivations for engagement of all players.

Secondly, the design of social policy should be needs-driven rather than start from a premise that a function should be devolved or specific to a social category. Sometimes needs will cross social categories and settings. Policy needs to dovetail if social mobility is not to be impeded. Blanket prescriptions will always miss the point somewhere. Greater sophistication is required to select the appropriate model. Maximising the inclusion of diversity means selecting the right model and opening up access by removing barriers in ‘transactional infrastructure’.

Thirdly, if the aim is to equip people for wider social participation, the focus should be on building networks beyond welfare provision, the needs, constraints and processes relating to those with whom connection is sought. However, recipients also need to be equipped to play an active role within the process – if the objective is to build confidence and capacity the nature of the process should reinforce these goals, not undermine them. This is not necessarily an argument for establishing a new raft of professionals; it may mean re-orientating and re-skilling existing professionals and clarifying roles, although support such as advocacy needs to be independent of providers if to instil trust.

Fourthly, communication, including feedback mechanisms, is important to ‘embed’ people into processes and match goods to needs. Whether assessment is of recipients, or of the goods on offer, there are challenges to accurate recognition which need to be addressed. Sometimes adequate information cannot be conveyed to enable meaningful user choice. Sometimes choice

is impossible; sometimes undesirable. Diversity in providers does not necessarily expand recipient choice in ways which are meaningful and it can create unnecessary complexity.

Issues for further research

There is undoubtedly more that can now be done to refine the theoretical framework, and to expand on its application to policy. For example, the model could be applied to different policy areas and initiatives. Thorough evaluation of policy against the 'inclusive' model may reveal new practicalities to be addressed, or different courses of action that could be taken.

The framework could be developed and refined in a number of directions. By drawing on different disciplines, it might be informative to consider from the perspective of each. From the perspectives of specialists in relevant areas of study, other limitations and dilemmas may become apparent as may other issues worthy of further exploration. For example, specialists working in a group-based area of study (e.g. Women's Studies, Disability Studies) would be well-placed to identify the implications of different approaches in the discrimination literature for their particular group.

Those working in the poverty field may find it fruitful to explore the extent of diversity of views about essential goods, customary activities and lifestyles; to explore where there is commonality, where diversity can be practically accommodated and the cost implications. This should also help identify whether particular needs can reliably be associated with particular characteristics or settings and furnish justification for additional amounts. Through identifying and underlining common ground, the basis for social solidarity is revealed. There should be better understanding of differences too, whether compatible or incompatible, their nature and degree. To undertake such a study is not without its dangers. It is not just re/ distribution that can be politically sensitive, so too can the recognition of difference.

Additional broad areas for empirical research might include:

- What are the differences and similarities in different groups' experiences of discrimination?

- What formal and informal indicators are used in assessing for welfare provision and how can their efficacy be evaluated?
- What approaches to empowerment exist and how effective are they from the perspectives of service user and provider?
- Could the framework of relationship properties (chapter 8) be used for investigation of the qualities of relationships in welfare delivery?
- What gaps and traps exist at life-course transition points and between settings?
- Exploration of case studies of welfare delivery, deconstructing processes, identifying transactional infrastructure barriers that can intervene at each stage and how they can be removed.
- Can any consensus be found on 'equivalent value'?

Using the theory as a basis for empirical research and to develop, implement and evaluate policy may well reveal new angles, challenges and issues to be addressed, showing how the theoretical framework might be refined. In turn, that might have implications for the 'inclusive' policy model and for further empirical research, and so on.

The way ahead

This thesis has taken the development of the theoretical framework and its application as far as possible within the space available. Finding ways to include and value people with diverse characteristics while sustaining social cohesion seems set to remain of critical importance for the foreseeable future. It is hoped that this thesis makes a substantive contribution to this debate and that it could aid the development of inclusive, empowering welfare provision, while signposting new avenues worthy of exploration.

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